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AUSTRALIAN FAIRY TALES



 HUME COOK 



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"He leaped into his flying carriage and was off to save the Princess from an awful fate."—See page 81.

AUSTRALIAN
FAIRY TALES
BY HUME & COOK
WITH-ILLUSTRATIONS - BY
CHRISTIAN-YANDELL



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MELBOURNE

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DEDICATED
TO
Keith, Madge and Kevyn,
whose appreciation
encouraged
the telling of the tales
and
prompted this publication.

PREFACE

THE STORIES in this little book have been set down almost in the same words in which they were told. How the telling of them came about is a very simple matter. Having three children, each of whom loved a Fairy Tale, it somehow became the fashion, on Sunday evenings, to tell them a story.

On one occasion, when the youngest member was just about to be taken to bed, his sister said; "None of the books about Fairies ever say a word about Australia! Are there any Australian Fairies, Father?"

Somewhat hastily, perhaps, I answered: "Why, yes, of course! Whole tribes of them!"

Instantly the order went forth: "Then you will please tell us about them the very next time you tell us a story!"

THE AUTHOR.

Melbourne,
Australia,
1925.

FOREWORD.

By the RT. HON. W. M. HUGHES, P.C., M.P.

Formerly Prime Minister of Australia.

War and Science between them have played havoc with the old order. Ancient landmarks have been swept away; cherished superstitions exposed. The World has changed, but man remains the same. His faith in Kings may have gone, but his belief in Fairies remains. In childhood, he lives to-day as he has lived throughout the ages, in a world which knows not change, and where the cold, hard light of science can never penetrate. A wonderful world, inhabited by glorious beings with shimmering wings and glittering diadems and wands; to whom nothing is impossible; for whom neither time nor space exist, save at their will.

"Where is this wonderful world?" sneers Mr. Gradgrind; "I cannot see it—it does not exist!" No, not for you, my dear Sir! You are one of those who are not privileged to pass its magic portals. But it is a very real world for all that. It may indeed turn out to be no less real than this, which is the only one you deem worth knowing, and which it is very obvious you do not know at all.

It is the world in which the children of all the world live: the world of Bogies and Dragons, Fairy Princes and Princesses, Giants and Giant Killers. It is the world we knew so well when we, too, walked with fearful joy amid its mystic, thrilling groves. To dull and prosaic souls it does not exist, for, lacking imagination, they walk in outer darkness. Those fairy forms—so real to the vivid mind—are to them but the shadows of trees in the flickering light of the moon.

Hitherto, the Fairies we have known, though very delightful beings, have had their habitat in far-off lands. Thanks to the researches of Mr. Hume Cook, we are now able to wander through the enchanted Bush with real Australian Fairy Princes and Princesses; share in the thrills of their amazing adventures; rejoice in the triumph of virtue; and be glad at the downfall of vice.

The dwellers in Australian Fairy Land, although akin to those of other climes, have a distinct character of their own. Even the wicked Desert Fairies endear themselves to us. Although they do not vomit fire, as did the dreadful dragon of our childhood, one feels that, given a sporting chance, they would make that boastful beast curl up like a salted worm.

As for the other Fairies, everybody will love them. The stories are well told, and the book is beautifully illustrated. Mr. Hume Cook's book is, in very truth, a really and truly Fairy Story Book, which Australian children of all ages will read with avid interest and take to their hearts.

W. H. Hughes

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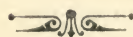
Australian Fairy Tales

AS TOLD TO

"BIDGYBAH," "POLLYKIM," and "PINKLES."

TIME OF TELLING: Sunday Evenings.

PLACE: Any old spot remote from the older members of the family.



Descriptive Characteristics of the Audience:

"BIDGYBAH": Schoolboy; full of strange noises and a scornful contempt for all things sisterly and feminine; but with such an unquenchable thirst for stories as to be able to keep silence whilst one is being told, and to forget for the nonce to pull his sister's hair, pinch her arm, or otherwise constitute himself a source of annoyance.

"POLLYKIM": Schoolgirl; demure of manner, yet overflowing with the ability to pointedly disregard all that a boy holds in esteem; but so hungry for fairy tales as to forget her airs for the time being, to sit still during the telling of the tale, and to refrain from giving other offence.

"PINKLES": Chubby male person, aged five, with fair flaxen curls,

and a complexion remarkable for the fact that pink carnations seem to be forever chasing white piccotees up over his cheeks into the starry depths of his grey-blue eyes. In addition, he possesses an immeasurable love of stories about Fairies; and a red-gum faith of so sound a quality, that the white ants of doubt and disbelief have hitherto attacked it in vain!

Origins of the Names

- “**BIDGYBAH**”: Title assumed by the present owner. Supposed to have at one time belonged to an aboriginal Chief of extraordinary bravery and skill. Real name, Keith.
- “**POLLYKIM**”: Pet name; origin shrouded in mystery. Believed to have arisen out of an attempt to pronounce a word too difficult for a childish tongue to overcome. Real name, Madge.
- “**PINKLES**”: Descriptive appellation; bestowed at a very early age consequent upon a pink and white complexion of more than ordinary beauty. Real name, Kevyn.





A WATER FAIRY.

THE MAGIC WELL

*In the centre of Australia there's a large and lovely lake,
And its waters gleaming golden, from the sun their glory take;
In the middle of the waters there's an Island, wondrous fair,
And the perfume of its fruit and flowers, like incense fills the air!
In the heart of this fair Island there's a wonder-working well,
By the fairy-folk enchanted; for 'tis there the Fairies dwell!*

MOST people seem to think that the heart of Australia is nothing but a sandy desert. Well, that's not quite correct. As a matter of fact, though not a great number know it, the very, *very* centre is inhabited by Fairies. They live there on a beautiful island in the middle of a great lake; and all they have, including their wonderful city, is all due to the "Magic Well"!

On their splendid Island there are hills covered with trees—forest trees! And there are great valleys where wild-flowers grow; and springs and streams and waterfalls; and caves with stalactites in them; those funny things that look something like sheep's tails frozen! These stalactites hang down from the cave-roofs, and even they are due to the Magic Well! That may seem strange; but the way it happens is this:—Little drops of water, very slowly oozing down from the top of the cave, carry with them the tiniest bits of sand or limestone. The first pieces of sand or limestone just stick to the roof; and then, every other little piece, after it gets through, just clings to the piece that got there before it, so that, by-and-by, thousands and thousands of them, all joined together, make a stalactite.

But of course there are many other things there beside those that hang in caves! For instance, there are the loveliest birds and butterflies; the most beautiful beetles and moths; and, above all, the rarest lot of Australian animals the eye could wish to see. Kangaroos, Wallabys and Woolly Bears! 'Possums, Platypuses, and gaily-coloured Lizards, big and little! . . . And then, the fern gullies! Why, there never were such ferns anywhere ever before! Thousands of them! Tree-ferns galore! Stag-ferns in plenty! Maiden-hair in bunches as large as rose bushes; larger indeed; and cat-heads; besides great trailing asparagus ferns, and every kind that the world knows! Date palms, too; and lofty cocoanut trees; with the cocoanuts on them always ready to pull; and banana trees, with great yellow bunches of bananas hanging down most temptingly!

Then there are bread-fruit trees, as well as fruit trees of every other description; and flowers, and flowering shrubs in untold number and variety. Can you imagine such a place? And all due to the Magic Well! For without that Well the Island could not have come into existence; and, if anything were to happen to it, the Lake would disappear, and the Fairies of Australia have to find a new home!

Strictly speaking, it should have been said that the "superior fairies" would have to find a new home, for, as everybody knows, not all the fairies live in one place. Even those who belong to "Fairy Island" are not *always* there! Over and over again they are sent travelling about on errands for their King and Queen; and sometimes they are given very important work to do. For example, they are constantly showing the rain-drops just exactly where to fall; coaxing the wind to blow more softly on the delicate flowers; pulling the dark clouds away so that the sun can steadily shine upon the Earth, warming the soil, causing things to grow—and making everything very sweet and pleasant for everybody!

Of course there are other tribes, such as the Mountain Fairies, the River Fairies, the Forest Fairies, and many more. But these are all subject to King Waratah at Fairy Island, and have only a Governor over them now. That was not always the case. Many years ago the various tribes were all independent of one another, and each tribe had its own particular piece of country within which it lived and was



A FOREST FAIRY.

supreme; and, naturally, each had its own King or Queen ! But a time arrived when this was changed; and it came about in quite a wonderful way, and, in a manner of speaking, all through the Magic Well ! Some day you shall be told all about it; but, for the moment, attention must be devoted to the discovery of the Magic Well, and what took place as the result of that happy event.

Now this is how the Well came to be found.

Prince Waratah, as he was then called, having come of age, was sent by his father to look for a wife. It was then the custom among the fairies—as it still is among the crowned heads of the world—for the King's sons and daughters to get their wives or husbands from among the families of other Royal households. The Prince's father—who was the head of the Forest Fairies—was called King Eucalyptus ! And a very clever and prudent old King he was, too; though not nearly so wise as his son became, as you shall learn later on ! At the same time he was not without a great deal of what is termed "natural shrewdness"! He therefore reasoned that, if he sent his son travelling from tribe to tribe—with strict injunctions or orders not to choose a wife until he had seen at least six Princesses—he must indeed learn many things that were unknown to his father. So off the Prince went !

As it chanced, however, his father need not have had any anxiety about his making any mistake in selecting a wife; for he had very good taste, and was gifted with what is called discrimination, or the power to see for himself the best in whatever came under his notice. So, though he paid many visits to many Fairy Kings, up to this time he was by no means satisfied to make a choice. His latest journey had taken him to stay for a while with a tribe of Fairies who lived in what is now called the "Northern Territory"—quite close to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

The King of those Fairies had several daughters, all very bright and witty in their conversation, but, possibly owing to the heat of the climate, rather sallow complexions, and not nearly beautiful enough to please the Prince's fancy. He, therefore, finally resolved to make his way across the Continent from North to South; for, so he had heard, the Wattle Fairies of that part of Australia that

is now known as Victoria, were particularly fair and lovely, and he cherished the hope that at long last he would discover a Princess fit to be his wife.

As may be imagined, in the course of such an extraordinary lengthy journey—about two thousand miles—he naturally met with quite a number of adventures. Of these there is not time to tell; except to say, that though over and over again in peril from the wicked Desert Fairies, who repeatedly tried to overwhelm him in storms, he always had the good fortune to win safely through!

When he had gotten exactly half way across Australia, he came upon a very singular sort of hill, rising in great slopes above the otherwise level country. Interested, he stayed to closely examine it, climbing at last to the top. Whilst there, night came on, and being very tired, he settled himself to sleep, selecting for a pillow one of the numerous tussocks of grey-green grass which were growing all over the hill.

Of other vegetation there was very little—only a few stunted trees, almost devoid of leaves. But the hill itself spread over a very wide area indeed; and though in many places sandy, there were other spots, as the Prince had seen, that were covered with what looked like excellent soil; ready to grow anything if only plenty of water were available. In point of fact, it was on these patches that the stunted trees were growing, only saved from death, no doubt, by the falling of extremely rare showers of rain. There were gorges and gullies too; but so dry from lack of water that only the merest tuft of things were growing there. Round about the hill, as far as the eye could see, and, further, stretched miles and miles of sandy desert!

Just as the sun rose in the morning, the Prince awoke. In order to pull himself to a sitting posture he clutched at one of the grass tussocks that grew near. To his astonishment, it came easily out of the ground. But judge of his intense surprise, when, gazing steadily into the hole left by the uprooted grass, he saw a tiny drop of water slowly come through the soil at the bottom. Quickly replacing the tussock, and firmly bedding the loosened earth round about it, he gave himself up to pondering on the very peculiar fact that had just come under his observation.



"To his intense astonishment it came easily out of the ground."

After a while a great thought came to him. The drop of water he had seen could not be there by itself. It must have come from some larger supply located deeper down in the earth. If that were the case—and there could be no reason to doubt it—then it might become possible to do many things, which, in his dreamings, he had often planned to carry out if only the opportunity offered. Such, for example, as the building of a new, safe, and perfectly wonderful City, the creation of a Fairy Navy; or the erection of a glorious Palace greatly in advance of anything that had ever before been seen.

Almost all his life—maybe because he had so frequently noted the comparative scarcity of water in the inland portions of Australia—he had thought of what might be done with unlimited supplies. Here, then, appeared to be his golden opportunity. It was a chance not to be missed!

Giving up his quest of a wife, and hastening home with all speed, he secretly got together a number of his more intimate friends and told them of his remarkable discovery. He then persuaded them to join him in going back to the Well, in order to see what might be done with its waters, and whether or not he could do some of the other things about which he had been thinking; but, for fear of failure, he did not let his father know of his return or of his intentions. For the same reason he did not tell his friends what was in his mind; but he resolved that should the matter turn out as fortunately as he hoped, to take them into his entire confidence and seek their assistance in the carrying out of the great enterprises he had in view. So, having provided them with everything he thought might be required for the works he proposed to carry out, quietly and unobtrusively, off they set upon their mission.

After surmounting many difficulties, in due course they arrived at the place where Prince Waratah had rested a few weeks earlier. He very easily found the spot where he had lain down to sleep, because, quite apart from a pile of stones he had set up to mark it—the tussock he had disturbed was, consequent upon its getting a little more water than it had previously been able to draw from the earth, much greener than before. It was only the work of a moment to again pull

it from its place, and there, sure enough, in a very few minutes the tiny bubble of water appeared!

To say that they all were deeply interested is to put it mildly. But they were not allowed to waste much time in merely wondering from whence the water came. Acting under the Prince's orders, a circle was first drawn round the opening from which the tussock had come. From centre to circumference the distance was six feet, so that from edge to edge of the circle was exactly twelve feet. Within the circle they all then set to work removing the earth, even the Prince himself digging away with the others.

Curiously enough, as the digging advanced, they found embedded in the soil several implements such as are used by the Garden Fairies in cultivating their lands; just exactly in the same way as people in England, in digging wells, often come across old Roman coins or other articles. When they had reached a depth of about twelve feet, meeting a little more moisture as they proceeded, they suddenly came upon some broad flat stones. The Prince instantly ordered them all to stop working until he had looked them over carefully, with a view to seeing how they might best be removed. Gently stamping his foot to test the thickness of the stones, the Prince thought he detected a somewhat hollow sound coming from underneath. Listening intently, he vigorously stamped upon the particular stone upon which he was then standing. In doing so he involuntarily stepped backwards, and, to his amazement, the stone immediately tip-tilted a little, and out shot a long thin stream of clear cold water!

Naturally enough, the startlingly sudden appearance of the water caused the Prince to step still further back, with the result that when his weight was removed the stone fell into its place again, and so shut off the water. But the secret was out! They had found the entrance to a subterranean spring or well! Further experiments showed that two stones, fitting together, formed a kind of trap-door barring the waters from coming out. To open or close the trap-door stones required very little effort once the trick was learned; and in accordance with the extent to which they were opened, the amount of water released could be easily regulated.

Of course they all got very wet indeed whilst they were learning the Secret of the Well. But that gave them very little concern. The truth is, they were far too interested to bother about so small a matter, and they eagerly awaited the further instructions of the Prince. These were brief but effective. They were to replace the earth in the Well; and, having done so, to so cover the whole with tussocks of grass as to make it appear to any too enquiring eye that there were only an unusual number growing there. A further advantage of placing so many together would be to serve as a distinguishing mark, on their return in strength, to carry out the projects of which he would later on inform them. Meantime, it was his wish that they should all return to their homes, as he particularly desired to tell his father the wonderful news, and to consult him as to the future.

A little disappointed, perhaps, but nevertheless perfectly loyal to the Prince's wishes, they therefore set about returning. Arrived back, the Prince immediately waited upon his father, King Eucalyptus, and, omitting no essential detail, told him the whole story from the time when he first observed the tiny drop of water up to the actual unearthing of the Well and the learning of how to release its waters.

Very quietly the King listened to the end, smiling occasionally as the narrative proceeded. When the Prince had finished he said: "The Well you have found once belonged to the Garden Fairies. It is a Magic Well; and it is fed by an underground stream called 'Fruitful River.' The river will never run dry, no matter how much water is taken from it. The Garden Fairies are now dispersed all over Australia; every tribe having some of their number attached to it except the Desert Fairies and the Ocean Fairies. It was the Desert Fairies who drove them out of their original home and scattered them among the other tribes.

"All this happened hundreds of years ago, but the Golden Fairies still tell the tale of their lost possessions; and, though they are extremely peaceful and industrious, in their hearts they loathe the Desert Fairies for the injuries done them.

"It is said that the Desert Fairies, who are very vicious in their habits and also very war-like, became envious of the prosperity

of the Garden Fairies, and resolved to attack and conquer them. This they did, but, to their surprise, the war lasted for years and years, the Garden Fairies resisting with all their might the malicious onslaughts of their enemies.

"But the time came when they saw they must be defeated, and, rather than leave their Sacred Well (from which they gained all they had) to the mercy of the Desert Fairies, they resolved to seal it up with stones. This they successfully accomplished, covering the seal with earth.

"Then they left, but not before they sustained another terrific siege from the Desert Fairies, who, determined to overcome them, threw enormous quantities of sand over the whole place. If they had not done this they might afterwards have discovered just where the Well was, but so completely had they done their wicked work that it was almost impossible to tell one spot from another.

"So the place has remained these many hundreds of years, till you, fortunately, have had the good luck to find what the Desert Fairies have looked for in vain. Having found the Magic Well, you are at liberty to ask me for such a favour connected with it as may be within my power to bestow!"

For a moment Prince Waratah was so taken aback at the unexpected conclusion to his father's remarks, that he could hardly find words to express himself. Quickly realising, however, that here was an opening that might never occur again, he promptly asked permission to give up for the time being his search for a wife, to go back to the Well, and to take with him such of his friends, and so many of the working Fairies as would enable him to begin his most cherished ambition—the building of the City of his Dreams! It was of this he was thinking when he had said to his friends at the Well that he would later on discuss with them projects of great importance.

The King, under the circumstances, was only too delighted to give his consent, and added that, if at any time the Prince found himself in any difficulty and wanted advice and assistance, he was to come to him quite freely, and, as far as was possible, he would be willingly helped. All of which goes to show that the King in his heart was proud to find his son so full of enthusiasm, and was really desirous that he should succeed.



A DESERT FAIRY.

With so many things in his favour, it is thus easy to understand the joy with which Prince Waratah assembled his friends, and, taking them into his confidence, went into the minutest details as to his proposals. But at the same time he strongly counselled them not to mention or discuss his plans with anyone else; for he wanted everything to be kept a close secret until the right time came to disclose it.

The working Fairies were soon selected (about two thousand), but of course they were not told where they were going, nor exactly what they were expected to do. They could guess at things—that was all! And well might they exercise their minds in guessing, for never before had they seen such extensive preparations for work on such a gigantic scale. In the course of a few weeks there were got together hundreds of fairy barrows, picks and shovels. Scores and scores of fairy saws, hammers, chisels, planes and screw-drivers. Great quantities of timber; together with all kinds of machinery for making bricks, tiles, and earthenware pipes. Besides all these things there were any number of pots for holding paints, colours and varnishes, dozens and dozens of packages containing nails, screws, clips and cleats. Others again were filled with catches, cords, pulleys, and all sorts of small fittings. In addition, there were surveyors' instruments and engineers' tools. In short, there was every class and kind of thing required, or likely to be needed for the immense amount of work in contemplation.

As to food, that also was carefully preserved and safely stowed in appropriate packages and parcels. But more marvellous than all else, every machine package and parcel was given a set of fairy legs on which to travel. These were most ingeniously made, filled with electrical energy (which the Fairies know how to extract from the air), and then fitted to the particular parcel or package they were to carry!

When they were run down, just in the same way as the storage batteries which give light to tram-cars are replenished, they were recharged with electricity, and off they went again! Thus, when everybody and everything was ready to move out upon the long trek, there was witnessed a sight the like of which can only be imagined; for never before or since has such a thing been done.

First and foremost rode the Prince, mounted on a dainty milk-white pony not any larger than a sheep. Close behind, riding chestnut ponies with silver manes and tails, all about the same size as the Prince's pony, came his chosen friends. It is said that the horses from which these ponies were bred came originally from Spain. A boat load of them was on its way to that part of Western America which is called California; but, driven by storms and stress of weather, the ship was thrown out of its course, and eventually wrecked on the East Coast of Australia. The Fairies rescued the horses, fed and cared for them; and during the long years that followed, slowly bred them down in size. Unfortunately they are all dead now; but at the time that the Prince set out to build his Fairy City, they were at their prime. Other animals landed in Australia have met with better luck, and have not died out. For instance, the Indian buffaloes that were long ago placed on Melville Island have increased in number until to-day there are thousands of them.

But to continue! After the Prince's personal friends, there followed on in proper order, the Fairy workmen, all astride of dappled greys. Then came the surveyors' instruments and all the machinery, tools, packages and materials; the longest, strangest procession that ever sallied forth from anywhere. At the extreme rear came the fairy cooks, with all their pots and pans, and fairy fireplaces; everything spotlessly clean and shining in the sunlight! The cooks all rode in fairy waggons, each about the size of a butter-box, and as white as snow! The waggons were drawn by coal-black ponies, whose highly polished coats rippled and shimmered whenever the sunbeams fell upon them. Surely never before had there been seen so uncommon a sight in all the world!

There is perhaps no need to mention that all the fairy folk not going with the Prince turned out to see him and his retinue depart. Great was the cheering as each particular section passed along; and many a one openly speculated as to where they were all journeying, and what they were going to do. But the secret had been well kept, and all the guesses were wide of the mark.

When the Prince and his party were fairly on their way, everything seemed somewhat quiet after the noisy send-off that had been

given them. He, therefore, sent word along the line that he would like them to sing their new marching song. This particular song he had himself written, composed, and taught them during the time when they were preparing for the task upon which they had now set out. This is it:—

Left! Right! Left! Right!
On we go from morn till night;
Heads up! Shoulders back!
Stepping straightly on the track!
Step strong! Move along!
Cheer the journey with a song!
Let the chorus roll and ring,
As we all together sing:

Step right! Keep bright!
Soon will come the cooler night!
Then shall all our marching cease,
While we rest and take our ease,
No one but ourselves to please,
Till the morning light!

Left! Right! Left! Right!
Forward march to meet the night!
Stride out! Sing and shout!
Put your cares to right about!
Step strong! Tramp along!
Singing still the same old song!
Send the words on aery wing,
As we once again them sing!

Step right! Keep bright!
Soon will come the cooler night!
Then shall all our marchings cease,
While we rest and take our ease,
No one but ourselves to please,
Till the morning light.

Nothing loath to comply with the Prince's desire, they were soon heartily singing the song, and much enjoyment they got from it. The fact is, that marching songs, as a rule, have a very brightening effect upon the singers. Words and music are alike intended to bring this about. Knowing this to be the case, and realising that as the long day stretched itself out, many of his followers were certain to get very tired, he deliberately chose such words and sentiments for his song as would tend to keep their spirits up till night time, when they could rest!

When at last night did arrive, Prince Waratah and all his company found themselves in a very lovely wooded valley. It was an ideal place for camping. A little silver stream supplied them with plenty of water. The dry leaves that had fallen from the trees, and the smaller broken branches that lay around supplied them with kindling and firewood; an extra supply of leaves also making very good bedding on which to spread their sleeping rugs.

After supper, feeling very comfortable and happy, they fell to humming the most delightful tunes imaginable, crooning tunes, such as mothers sing to their babies; soft and low and sweet. The effect was truly remarkable! In the course of fifteen or twenty minutes—just as the stars began to peep at them through the gently swaying tree tops—they were all sound asleep; or, to be quite accurate, all were asleep except the few guards posted at fairly distant intervals along the outer edges of the camp. Their duty was to watch out for any attack by possible enemies, such as the Mountain Fairies, who, although not really wicked, sometimes take it into their heads to throw down huge pieces of rock, or to send a giant tree hurtling over a cliff, to the great danger of those who may be camped or passing below.

Next morning everybody was stirring bright and early; and, after breakfast and packing up, the march began again. So day followed day for many a day. Sometimes they travelled up hill; sometimes down. Occasionally they had to make their way through timbered country; and now and again a stream had to be crossed. But, like soldiers, they made very light of such a passing difficulty, for they carried a certain number of pontoons with them, and, throw-

ing them down as bridges, over the river they went in perfect safety. "Pont," as you probably know, is the French word for bridge; and "pontoons" are usually made of empty barrels strung together to make a bridge. It was thus they crossed over waterways through which they could not wade.

But the time came when they left forest and stream behind them, and had to travel over great stretches of land covered with coarse and stubby grasses. It was not pleasant by any means. Yet worse conditions were ahead; for when the rough grass lands were finally crossed, they came to the great sandy desert. Sand, and yet more sand—nothing but sand! Luckily they were not far from their destination. In two more days, the Prince told them, they would be there. As a consequence they began the desert march with a certain amount of light-heartedness, buoyed up by the thought that within a very little while their wanderings would cease. Unhappily, however, before that time arrived, they found themselves engaged in a terrific struggle with the Desert Fairies.

These nomadic Fairies, possibly resentful of the coming of the others, or, maybe, just because they are naturally nasty, viciously and vigorously attacked them in force.

Following their usual tactics, they first brought up an extremely hot wind, and, driving this before them full into the face of the wayfarers, sought to make them beat an inglorious retreat. But in spite of the fearful discomfort which the scorching wind brought to them, they kept steadily on; absolutely determined not to be turned from their purpose by a hot wind, however fierce!

Seeing, therefore, that this attack was a failure, the Desert Fairies resorted to their dreadful second line of attack. Picking up vast quantities of sand—(which by this time was doubly hot from the rays of the sun and the blistering wind that had passed over it)—they flung it before them, seeking to choke, blind and burn the intrepid adventurers. Eyes, ears and noses became partly filled with it. Under the strain, lips blackened and cracked, and parched throats ached with a pain almost unendurable as the onslaught developed in intensity! Yet, still undaunted, on they went! Their courage and

steadfastness were marvellous! Well might the Prince be proud of them! As a matter of fact, foreseeing such a fight, he had repeatedly urged them, should it occur, not to be dismayed and fall back, but to stand firm, and at the right moment, effective help would certainly be forthcoming.

And so it chanced! For, just when the contest seemed no longer possible of endurance, and despair was about to bring panic to their midst, the Shower Fairies arrived, and, with their pellet-like raindrops beat the sand particles down, cleared and cooled the air, and with refreshing waters restored the faint and famished Fairies. More remarkable than all, their late attackers, finding themselves thus bereft of their weapons, turned tail and fled, leaving the Prince and his faithful followers masters of the field.

This was a wonderful victory, and serves to show how very wise the Prince was, and with what profit he had reflected upon the things he had seen in his previous travels. In particular, he had noted that the only thing the Desert Fairies fear is water, especially in the form of raindrops. With great foresight he had, therefore, arranged that there should follow on behind his company a tribe of Shower Fairies, ready to act should the need arise. True, they were a little late, but this is accounted for by the fact that each of them had to bring along a full supply of raindrops, and as these are very heavy for such wee folk to carry—especially in the teeth of a hot driving wind—they were somewhat longer in coming up than they should have been. Nevertheless they were not too late, and, when they did come, their work was splendidly done.

The way to the Magic Well was now clear! So, after bathing in the pools which the Shower Fairies had created—(soon, alas! to disappear!)—they rested until the next day. Then, in the highest possible spirits, they set about their final march, singing with the greatest gusto as they went their famous marching chorus:—

Left! Right! Left! Right!
Soon will come the cooler night!
Then shall all our marchings cease,
While we rest and take our ease,
No one but ourselves to please,
Till the morning light!



"The Shower Fairies arrived, and, with their pellet-like raindrops beat the sand particles down,"

THE FAIRY CITY

*Where the magic well was found,
Peace and comfort now abound;
For a city, nobly planned,
Built by a Fairy Band,
Rears itself above the hill,
Where a garden, formed with skill,
Graces every Court and Street,
Every path of pleasure sweet,
Down to where a water-ring,
(Lake of careful fashioning!)
Spreads its silver circling band,
Round about a Fairy land!*

IN the first story you were told how Prince Waratah, travelling in search of a wife, found, by accident, "The Magic Well!" You were also told how the finding of the well so inspired him, that he resolved to build a city round about it; and with this object in view, set out with a great company of Fairies, fully equipped, to march across Australia to where the Well is situated.

As you will remember, they had nearly reached their destination when they were savagely attacked by the Desert Fairies; but, with the timely aid of the Shower Fairies, the enemy was successfully routed; and the tale concluded by telling how, rested and refreshed, they all set out upon their final march, singing as they went.

When in the early afternoon they arrived at the site of the Magic Well, a halt was called; and for a little time everybody rested. Then, taking a company of working Fairies to the top of the hill, the Prince directed them to remove the grass tussocks he and his friends had planted to hide the opening to the Well from sight, and to dig down until they were told to stop.

These instructions they faithfully carried out; the Prince, meantime, watching their work with the utmost interest.

When, as he judged, they had gotten to within a few inches of the flat brown stones which formed the trap-door entrance to the Well, he ordered them to retire; and calling to those friends who on the previous occasion had seen it opened, he placed them in charge pending further orders. He then instructed one of his Officers to parade the entire Company close to the Well upon its Eastern side. This done, standing upon some of the freshly thrown out earth, he told them that in a few minutes they should witness a most engaging sight. In clear-cut language he followed this statement with a brief narrative of the finding of the Well; its fascinating history as related to him by his father; and an outline of his intentions with regard to the building of the Fairy City. In this project, he added, he expected to receive their willing co-operation and assistance; an expectation which his confidence in them led him to believe, would be fully realised!

As might have been expected, the speech was received with vociferous applause, which applause almost reached a roar, when, at a wave of his hand, amidst the greatest curiosity and excitement, his trusty officers within the Well, opened the door, and a great stream of clear, cool, crystal water shot fountain-like into the air!

If they had dared, they would at once have broken from their ranks and rushed pell-mell to the side of the Well to see from whence the Water came; but, too thoroughly trained to break discipline, they waited the command to dismiss.

Before dismissing them, however, the Prince ordered the cooks and kitchen assistants to retire and prepare an extra special open air supper. This, he said, was not only to indicate his pleasure at the fact that at last they had arrived at the scene of their future operations, but in token of his admiration of the way in which they had borne themselves throughout the trials and terrors of their long and arduous march. They were then released from duty; and whilst the meal was preparing, occupied the time in a most minute examination of the Well and its surroundings.

Just as supper was about to be served, and when everyone was in place, the Prince rose and said: "Before partaking of the dainty viands now before us, I wish you all, on this historic and maybe sacred

occasion, to rise and drink with me, in the waters of the Magic Well, all success and enduring prosperity to the greatest enterprise ever initiated in Austral Fairy Land 'The Building of the Fairy City!' " Immediately all stood up, and with cheers that almost reached the sky, quaffed a fairy flagon of clearest water to the Prince's Toast.

A "Fairy flagon," you should know, is made up of Gum leaves put into moulds, points up, and pressed into the shape required. To hold the leaves together, and to make the flagon retain its shape, a kind of cement is used, made from an extract of black ants' milk and beeswax. It is very binding, and in addition, takes on a most beautiful polish, through which the gum leaves shine as clearly as do fruits or flowers that are preserved in ice.

Now the waters of the Well have a very singular and happy effect upon all who drink of them; for though the Prince had not said a word about it, they contain certain life-giving properties which bring to those who drink them the most enchanting results. It is because of these peculiar properties that the Well is a Magic Well; its waters work wonders in a way that cannot be seen. Thus, shortly after drinking of them, the Fairies found themselves greatly stimulated and exhilarated in spirits. But their prime quality lies in their power to rejuvenate those who partake of them. That is to say they have the effect of making one young, and strong, and active again, no matter how tired or worn out one may have been beforehand.

But to resume! After supper—and a very fine one it was, too!—as usual, they sang their crooning lullaby songs until all except the sentry guards fell off in sleep.

Next morning, their strength renewed—rejuvenated, in fact—just as the golden lances of the sun came piercing through the fast dispersing clouds of night, they woke, ready and eager for any kind of work there might be to do. And certainly there was no shortage of employment. As soon as breakfast was over the Surveyors looked out their instruments and made ready to determine the limits and proportions of the intended city and grounds. Very clever fellows are the Surveyors. And yet all their skill is based upon a thorough grasp of a few simple facts. They know, that just as the alphabet is called the A B C, because in those letters are contained every line

and curve that is necessary to the formation of any of the other twenty-three letters; so, within the circle, \circ , the square, \square , and the triangle, \triangle , are to be found every line and curve, and every degree of measurement that can possibly be used in the laying out or building of anything in the world, from the Pyramids to a Modern Battleship!

Using the Magic Well as a centre from which to start, they first ran a line two miles due East, and a second one two miles due West. Returning, they did the like thing two miles North and two miles South. Then, just as a boy uses a piece of string tied to a stick stuck in the ground to draw a big ring in which to play marbles, so they, by means of a large number of pegs, made a circle exactly twelve miles in circumference, right round the base of the hill. In this way there was enclosed an area of ground that was precisely four miles across, no matter from what part of the outer edge the start was made.

As soon as the ring was clearly marked, a small army of Fairies were put to work all along its outer edge, digging out a trench twelve feet wide and four feet deep. Later on, this trench was made fifty-two feet wide and twelve feet deep. As the earth was taken out it was speedily removed by another army of fairy workmen and deposited on different parts of the Hill pointed out by the Prince's Engineers, to be used later on in the making of lakelets, lily-pools, waterfalls, and all manner of delightful arbors, rose gardens, lavender beds, pansy plots, daffodil rings, and a thousand and one other altogether beautiful things meant for glorious display.

In the meantime, certain specially qualified engineers — who really belonged to the Cave Fairies, and therefore fully understood underground tunnelling and mining—having been persuaded by Prince Waratah to join his forces, were industriously directing the sinking of four great pits close beside the Magic Well. Each of these pits was situated directly under one of the lines running North, South, East and West. When they were sunken thirteen feet, sloping tunnels were begun, which tunnels, following exactly beneath the lines drawn on top, ultimately found an opening into the great trench on the rim of the circle two miles away.

But, of course, none of this work went on without interruption. It was only a matter of a very few days, when the Desert Fairies, impelled by curiosity, came to see what was going on. The great trench, which, as you will have surmised, was being digged to form a circular lake, first attracted their attention. And very much it puzzled them. What it all meant they could not understand; but, true to their vicious instincts, they soon made up their minds to try and destroy it. This they sought to accomplish by blowing immense quantities of loose sand into the excavation; thereby making it necessary to do the work all over again.

If, for the future prevention of this wanton and dastardly outrage, no remedy could have been found, here was an end to the making of the Lake. But there were brains among the Prince's Engineers, and one of them very cleverly constructed a most ingenious device for counteracting or stopping the flying sand. In a certain spot in one of the otherwise dry and sterile gorges, watered in some way not yet discovered, he had seen a very large number of bamboos growing. They were of all sizes; from the thickness of a lead pencil to the circumference of a man's wrist; and being very sheltered from the wind, they were all extremely tall. Getting a huge quantity of them brought up from the gorge, he first had them cleared of inside pith so as to leave a free passage from end to end. Taking the thinner ones, he had tiny holes bored into them about half an inch apart. This done, he fitted them, straight up and down, into a frame of the thickest ones, twelve feet square. When a number of these squares had been so fitted, they were taken to the outside edge of the Trench, and there set up by means of props or stays, also made of bamboo. A long line of bamboo piping was then laid to each of the squares, and duly fitted into that portion of the frame which touched the ground.

As can be seen, all that was now needed, was a supply of water rushing through the pipes to burst through the holes—no bigger than those in a gas burner—to make a water sprayer of astonishing value in beating down every grain of sand that came against it.

Very ingenious also, was the way in which this feat was accomplished! An enormous basket-basin was first woven out of bamboo

leaves and thoroughly stiffened with beeswax. It was then set upon pillars, made with stones taken from the ground, right against the opening to the Well. In appearance it looked something like the high round tanks one sees at railway stations. There was this curious difference, however, that through the bottom of the basin bamboo pipes came down, and these were joined to the other pipes that were to take the water to the squares.

Now it has to be remembered, that when the trapdoor of the Magic Well was opened, the water shot upwards into the air. To permit of the basin being placed in position, and for other reasons, the door had been closed and the water shut off. To make it fall into the basin when it should be again released, a kind of stand-pipe, surmounted by a concave shield something the shape of a reaping hook, was so erected as to be behind and over the water as it would rise. The shield, like the basin, was made of waxed bamboo leaves.

In due course, everything being ready, the trap-door was again opened, and, just as expected, the rising column of water struck the shield, and, running along its concave curve, poured downwards into the basin. For a little time the water seemed to leave the basin faster than it was received; but that was not really the case, for the engineer had calculated the matter to such a nicety, that not until the basin was almost brimming, and the weight of the water helped, did it empty as quickly as it was filled.

And what a sight it was when the squares sent out their spraying, sparkling streams of water! No wonder the Desert Fairies drew back in startled amazement. Rain they knew! A travelling water-spout they had seen and marvelled at! But here was something past all comprehension; a hundred thousand never-stopping jets of water, shooting straight at them, and, more weird and awe-inspiring than anything they had ever heard or seen before—giving out the strangest music, and the most brilliant colours, as the wind and sun played in and out among them.

Very soon they saw the results of the water's action. Everywhere within range the sand lay flat and heavy; and try as they might, every attempt to fling the loose grains through the spraying water into the trench was a dismal failure. They were completely

worsted, and for many a day thereafter the Fairy Workmen were allowed to follow their pursuits in unmolested freedom.

Having now rid themselves of the attacks of the Desert Fairies, the work of laying out the City and surroundings rapidly advanced. In particular, four things were pushed ahead with all possible speed. They were, the finishing of the great trench, the completion of the tunnels through which the water was to flow to fill it; the building of a very large basin and ornamental fountain over the pits and opening to the Well, and the construction, underneath the basin, of simple but effective machinery for the control and regulation of the waters of the Well.

In due time they were all finished, and ready to be put in use. Prince Waratah thereupon declared a general holiday in order that all might take part in the first and most important event connected with their venture, namely, the turning on of the water that was to transform the trench into a Lake, and, in so doing, convert what had hitherto been a hill in the desert, into Fairy Island!

They were therefore asked to assemble round about the Fountain, which, up to that day had been screened from view, what time those engaged upon its erection carried out their task. Now, exposed to all beholders, they saw that it consisted of three parts. First, there was the great black polished marble base, several feet in depth. Upon this base there rested a projecting white marble basin in the shape of an enormous water-lily; whilst the Fountain itself—made of greenish coloured bronze, rising from the centre—was so fashioned as to represent a glorious bunch of Waratah blooms, from the middle of which, a good deal taller than the rest, a very prince of Waratahs appeared!

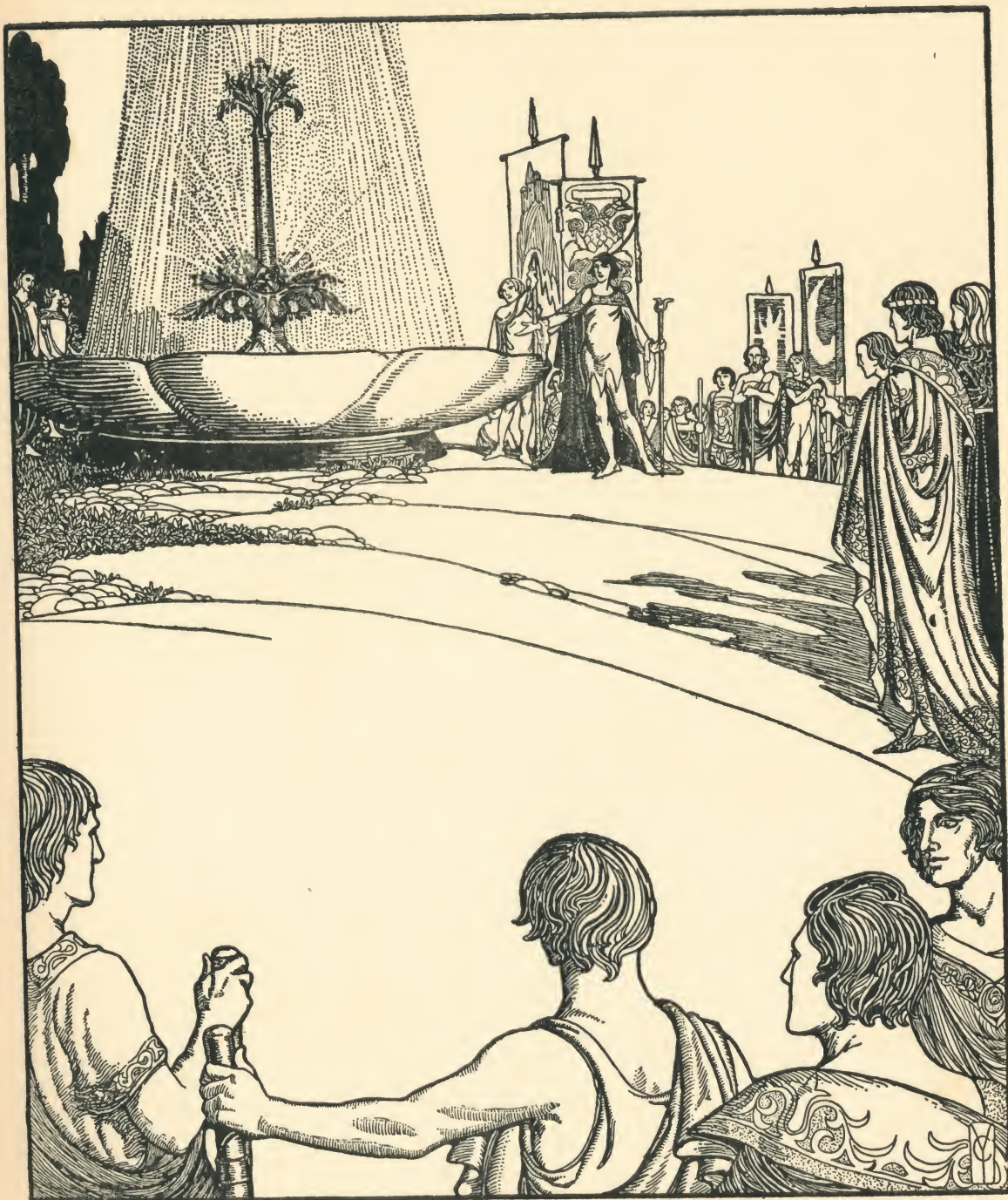
When the Fountain was in action, from every tiniest petal of these mimic blossoms was meant to shoot a delicate spray of clearest water; whilst the lofty central flower would send a shaft sheer into the sunlight! And so cleverly was everything adjusted and arranged, that not a drop of water was wasted. It all fell into the basin; and by means of neatly hidden overflow pipes, ran into the pits beneath, and so through the tunnels into the lake!

All this, however, is anticipating the event.

At twelve o'clock precisely, in accordance with the Prince's orders, the levers of the machinery, out of sight beneath the basin, were swiftly reversed. Instantly the Fountain began to play! From the bunched blossoms burst a misty spray; soft, cool and altogether delightful; especially when a number of gaily coloured rainbow tints peeked and pranced and revelled through and through it! In addition, high into the air from the central flower, shot a silver shaft of water; that, breaking as it fell, seemed to tremble into unnumbered strings and sprays of diamonds, zircons, tourmalines, topazes and opals, as the sun's rays glanced and gleamed amid the glistening drops! The spectacle was both charming and delightful; and the Fairies cheered and cheered again at the varying effects!

Then, suddenly, as often happens in a crowd, they broke into bands; some to go this way, and some that. Naturally enough, by far the greatest number of bands made for the Trench; for of course everybody was anxious to see what was there taking place. Almost before they arrived, however, the water came running through the tunnels; and, as they stood watching, steadily began to make its way from edge to edge. Of course it took many and many a day to fill; but, with a never stopping supply of water pouring into it from North, East, West and South, fill it did; and has remained so filled ever since!

Now the creation of this great Lake round about the land chosen for the Fairy City, and its gardens and grounds, not only acted as a bar to certain enemies, but so vast a quantity of cool fresh water had a miraculous effect upon the atmosphere. It became more humid, more moist. Trees and shrubs that could not have lived there before, no matter how much water might have been given them, now flourished amazingly. Flowers, fruits and other edibles of all kinds grew to perfection with astonishing rapidity. Birds of every sort and description, attracted in some mysterious way to the Lake and Hill, came in hundreds and settled there permanently. Bees, Beetles, Butterflies, and Moths, in like manner, came, as it were, out of space, to find a new, and possibly, a happier home than they had ever known before.



"Instantly the fountain began to play."

In an incredibly short space of time, therefore, the place became bright with the strains of feathered songsters and the glitter of their gaily plumaged friends.

About the Hill Miniature Forests were planted and grew as if by magic.

On the outer edge of the Lake, partly to honour his noble Father, King Eucalyptus; but also to act as permanent protection against the detestable Desert Fairies, who, like the Bedouins of the African desert, are always on the look-out to despoil and destroy, Prince Waratah caused to be planted a magnificent belt of Eucalypts. This great forest of truly splendid trees stretched in an unbroken line right round the Lake, and very soon became a joy to all beholders, and the dwelling place of every Australian animal that can be named. How they got there must for ever remain a mystery; but there is good reason to believe that Prince Waratah, who loved everything Australian, sent out Fairy scouts and messengers, mounted upon storks, cranes, and native companions, to tell them all about the New World, so to speak, and to bring them there!

As to the City, that soon began to show itself!

Following upon the general plan marked out by the Surveyors, high up on the hillsides pretty fairy residences were erected, their coloured roofs and snow-white fronts standing sharply out amid the trees and shrubbery scattered round about them. How all this work was done would take far too long to tell; but to give you an idea of what the City and surroundings looked like after they were finished, imagine yourselves going there on a visit.

Having arrived at the great belt of Eucalyptus trees surrounding the Lake, you would probably be directed by a Fairy Forest Ranger to one of the many narrow paths leading to what is called "The Outer Causeway." Taking the direction indicated, on coming through the forest, there would suddenly break upon your sight a gloriously beautiful Garden City set upon a Hill. At the foot of the Hill, running in a wide band completely round it, blue as the skies above, lie the waters of a serene and lovely lake. In some respects, this water circlet is not unlike the ring that surrounds Saturn, as

pictured in the books dealing with Astronomy; but this impression vanishes the nearer its margin is approached.

When you reach the "Outer Causeway," you discover that it is a wide flat pathway, made of concrete bordered with red granite; and that it encompasses or surrounds the whole of the lake. Where it touches the water, at equal distances apart, there stand three hundred and sixty-five rough-cut grey granite pillars; one for every day of the year, each seven feet high, to represent the days of the week. On the top of each of these pillars a perfectly round lamp has been placed; whilst at the foot, iron bolts and rings have been affixed. Thus the Pillars are not only useful for lighting purposes, but they also serve as Moorings for Boats.

Getting into one of the many Ferry Boats that cross from shore to shore, in due course a landing is made on the "Inner Causeway." Like its namesake, it also is a wide flat pathway; but in this case it is made of White Marble bordered with polished red granite; and it encloses or encompasses the whole of Fairy Island. On its outer rim; that is to say, on the side that touches the water, at equal distances apart, there are placed three hundred and sixty-five pillars of plain burnished copper, each four feet high; and, linked to these, are a double row of brass chains, polished and lacquered to the colour of sunset gold.

At the proper landing places, these chains are detachable, and attendant Fairies are in readiness to remove them as the boats arrive. Passengers are thus enabled to step ashore without inconvenience or trouble.

There are only four landing places; and from each of them runs a white marble path that leads to one of the four City Entrance Gates.

The four gates, which are placed North, East, West and South of the City, are set in a very strong wall of polished red granite, twelve feet high and thirteen inches thick, representative, of course, of the months of a year. Built into, and incorporated with the wall, and made of the same material, at even distances apart, are fifty-two watch towers, each seven feet high, one for each week of a year. These are surmounted by pillars of exquisitely wrought copper,

capped by star-shaped electric torches that, throughout the livelong night, send their searchlight beams across the Lake.

The Entrance Gates are perfect in proportion and design. They are made of copper; and each bears upon its central shield, in burnished brass, certain singular figures that to those who study them, are full of meaning, and carry many a useful lesson. The Eastern Gate, for example, is ornamented with a truly life-like picture of the Sun rising from a slightly ruffled sea into the cloud-crossed Heavens. In popular phrase, this is known as "Day's Gate"; but it is really meant to indicate the entry into life, wherein there are many clouds of ignorance and doubt, to be swept away by bringing to bear on them the light of education, thought, and reason.

The Western Gate, quite apart from its geographical position, is easily picked out by reason of the fact that it bears upon its face a striking likeness of the Full Moon bursting through the misty vapours of the night into the high unclouded skies. This is styled "Night's Gate"; but that is but a poor attempt at imagery, for its purpose is to typify the way in which the pure souls of men and women rise above the mists of death and make their way to the free clear spaces far, far above the world.

On the Northern Gate appears a representation of our own earth, seemingly buffeted about by stormy winds and lightning flashes; but still steadily pursuing its appointed way. The portion of the World most prominently displayed is Australia. In this case the name commonly given is "Earth's Gate." It is, however, a very inadequate title, for it is intended to convey the idea that duty and love of country are two of the greatest virtues; and that the endeavour of everyone should be, in spite of trouble or adversity, to continue along the path believed to be right, and in so doing, to remember that one's native land should ever be uppermost both in private and in public effort.

The Southern Gate has emblazoned upon it a portion of what a poet has described as "That inverted bowl we call the sky." In this instance the "Milky Way" is pictured; and prominent among the Stars beneath, the Southern Cross is shown. Generally speaking this is called "Heaven's Gate," and is a much more expressive

term than that which has been applied to any of the others. Nevertheless, the name given does not fully cover its inner import or meaning. As is well known, the "Milky Way" is caused by the massing, or bringing close to each other, of a very great number of stars; and, as their lights mingle, there is produced the strange, spilled milk effect, which gave rise to the descriptive appellation. But that is by the way! What it is meant to convey to those seeing it featured on the Gate, is the idea that Heaven's Gate is guarded by an innumerable host of Angels—milk white in their purity—who will not allow anyone to pass except by right! And only those have the "right" to enter Heaven, who, by their good conduct, truth telling, and straightforwardness, are fit and proper persons to be admitted to the Kingdom of God! The Southern Cross beneath, with its five glowing stars, represents Faith. Not that blind kind of faith which just believes a thing because someone has said that it is true; but one that is based on the fullest use of the five senses of Touch, Taste, Sight, Smell and Hearing, which have been given us as aids to understanding and knowledge.

Such, then, is a brief description of the Gates of Fairy Land; through one of which, to enter the City, everyone must pass. There is but one other remark to make concerning them. Whenever there is any reason for them to be mentioned, the order in which their names are given is always Northern, Eastern, Western, and Southern. This is so because the initial letters when put together spell N-E-W-S; and it is in this way that the Fairies contrive to give a constant reminder to everybody interested that they are well informed as to what is taking place in the four quarters of the Globe; without which information, they would, of course, be very sadly behind the times.

Having passed through one of the Entrance Gates, the first thing to strike the eye is a long path covered with golden coloured gravel. On either side of the path there is a green grass border. One of the reasons for having these borders is, that gold and green are Australia's National colours, and as the Fairies are very patriotic, it is easy to understand the significance or meaning of this delightful arrangement.



"To see the city at its best, it must be viewed at night."

At each of the Gates an exactly similar path may be seen. They run in straight lines to the Fountain and Gardens at the top of the Hill; and they are laid directly over the tunnels that carry the water from the Magic Well to the Lake. As a consequence, they serve more than one purpose. Firstly, they divide the city into four great triangles of exactly equal dimensions. Next, they give access from the four cardinal points of the Compass to the Prince's Palace and to the Fountain Gardens. Lastly, whilst completely hiding the tunnels from view, they make them easy to get at in case of accident. To have had any buildings above or across the water tunnels would have been a very great mistake; for quite apart from the difficulty of making repairs, if such were necessary, the weight of the erections might have brought about the very trouble it was desirable to avoid.

All the other paths run in circles. There are very many of them; but their number has never been told. Facing all the paths or streets, Fairy Houses have been built—dainty little dwellings of the quaintest patterns imaginable; but all of them having a piece of garden ground to add to the effect. The houses of the Prince's officers and the Fairy Leaders are on the four main straight streets; those of the other Fairies are on what may be termed the circular streets. The Prince has had reserved for his own use a very fine piece of land facing the Fountain on the flat top of the Hill. Here his wonderful Palace is erected, the foundations for which were laid even before the Lake was made.

But to see the City at its best, it must be viewed at night, when the artistic lighting arrangements show it up in all its glory.

Before attempting to describe the lights, or the perfectly entrancing effects they produce, it has to be stated that the streets are, by the Fairies themselves, called the "streets of the stars." Hence it is quite common to hear such names as the "Street of the Southern Cross," the "Street of Orion"; the "Street of Canopus"; or the "Street of Mars." This arises from the fact that Stars and constellations have been used as lighting models. The constellations, or groups of stars, are in use for the broader streets, and at all crossing centres; whilst the stars have been copied for the narrower streets and for the watch-towers on the wall.

As an example of many others, the Street of the Southern Cross will do to illustrate the way in which the City is lighted.

Here, at regular intervals apart, stand very finely made copper lamp-pillars. They have all been treated to what is called "oxidation"; with the result that they have an elusive sheen or polish about them that is very attractive to the eye. To further enrich them, and make them still more beautiful to behold, they are inlaid with burnished silver in pretty trailing designs borrowed from some of Australia's best known plants of a creeping or climbing habit. Among the number may be seen the purple Sarsaparilla; the white Forest Queen, and Sturt's Desert Pea. On the head of each pillar is placed an exact model or copy of the Southern Cross, from whose five stars there pours a flood of light from night till morning. When all the lamps in all the streets are thus sending forth their rays, the combined effect is positively glorious. The City seems, as it were, clothed in light; soft and delicate; and yet so clear as to bring to richer beauty everything it touches. Houses and gardens, clearly seen, are yet dream-like in their loveliness. Trees and Fountains; Lily ponds and Lavender beds; Water-falls, grottos, gorges, valleys; all are magically and mysteriously still, and wondrously beautiful! Viewed in this way, it is indeed a Fairy City, and a fit and proper setting for the crowning jewel of all its architectural and other wonders: The Prince's Palace!

But of that Palace, and of all its marvels, time does not permit to tell. That is a story which must be reserved for another occasion. Suffice it to say, that when it was at last finished and furnished, many there were who thought that it was time the Prince renewed his search for a wife; for here indeed was a Palace fit for any Princess on earth!



THE PRINCE'S PALACE

*Where once the earth was brown and bare,
A Prince's Palace, wondrous rare,
Now fronts the Fountain clear;
A monument to those whose skill,
Have made the bleak and barren hill
An Eden to appear!
And that fair Palace of the Prince,
The like of which, nor fore nor since
Has ever been achieved;
Was by such master craftsmen planned,
That nought, or in or out the land
Like it, has been conceived!
To it the rarest gifts were brought
From out the realms of purest thought;
And all the Beauty and the Art
That far too often stand apart—
Were into one great glory wrought
To grace the Fairy Isle!*

NOW the building of the Prince's Palace was the greatest piece of work performed in Fairy Land.

As you know, very many wonderful things were done with regard to the making of the Lake and the construction of the Fairy City. But all these suffer by comparison with what was accomplished in connection with the Palace. It is built of the purest white Marble. Facing the Fountain, on part of the flat top of the Hill, it stands amidst the most spacious garden grounds, and can be seen from every part of the City. It contains exactly twenty-four rooms: one for every hour of the day. They are divided into three equal sets. In one of these sets the whole of the work of the Palace is

carried out. Another set is devoted to pleasure and amusement; whilst above these are the rooms in which to rest or sleep.

From the white marble steps leading from the balconied verandah at the great front entrance to the Palace, a broad level pathway sweeps in a half circle out to the circular path which surrounds the Fountain gardens. Thus the Palace and the Fountain Gardens join each other. Like all the other paths, it is covered with golden coloured gravel; and, flanking it on either side, set in the loveliest of green grass lawns, there run two delightful flower-beds; forever filled with golden marigolds!

The high double doors which give entry to the Palace are made of oxidised, or slightly darkened silver, and stained glass. They are set in a splendid framework made of the same kind of silver; and this, and the lower panels of the doors, are inlaid with delicate designs in burnished gold. On the framework, the design takes the form of the trailing Sarsaparilla; whilst the panels are decorated with exquisitely executed bunches of flannel flowers surrounded with an oval border of Eucalyptus leaves. The glass in the upper halves of the doors, richer than any to be seen in old Cathedral windows, has had burned into it, in their own natural colours, Wattle blossoms and Waratah blooms. The Wattle blossoms occupy the centre panels, and the torch-like Waratahs are placed at either side.

Through the doors one passes into a wide Hall, out of which rises a branching stairway giving access to the rooms above. The Hall is paved with gorgeous tiles and lined with "fiddle-back" blackwood. The Hall seats are made of the same beautiful wood. On one side of the Hall, framed in silver, there is a picture of a hive of bees; and on the other side, also in a silver frame, there is a picture of an Ant-Hill; both indicative of work or industry.

But perhaps, before going further, you would like to know how the Fairies make the lovely tiles which pave the Hall. It is really rather interesting, and serves to show how very clever they are. Well! This is what they do!

When the wind blows the petals from the flowers—as it does every day—the Fairies at night time go and collect them. They at once dip them into a mixture made of an extract of black ants' milk,



A FLOWER FAIRY.

clear honey, and morning dew. How they make it has never been found out; but it has a truly surprising effect in preserving both the shape and colours of the petals. They then put them into moulds the size and shape of the tiles they propose to make; press them very tightly together; and lightly brushing the face of each tile so made with a little more of the mixture in order to cover it with a kind of glaze, set them up in the sunlight to dry. The drying finished, they put them through some kind of electrical treatment to make them hard, and they are then almost ready for use.

Before putting them in place however; by a secret process quite impossible to discover; they make the actual outline of the flower itself to appear through the glaze; and, more bewildering still, they cause the perfume of whatever flower petals have been used, to come back to them. They are thus enabled to faintly scent a room or hall with whatever pleasant odour they like to choose; the result of which is, that knowing the particular flower that one loves best, they can pay him or her a most delicate compliment, by simply introducing the perfumes of his or her favourite flower to the house or rooms he or she is to occupy.

As it happens, the flowers used in the making of the Hall floor tiles were wattle-blossoms. They were selected, partly because of the sunny effect to be obtained from their golden colour; and partly because Prince Waratah—who by this time had seen Princess Wattle Blossom and fallen in love with her—had made up his mind that some day she should be his wife. How he first came to visit the father of the lovely Princess, and the manner of his going, are now a matter of tradition; but at the time the journey took place it was looked upon as an almost miraculous performance.

As you will remember, when the Prince first found the Magic Well, he was on his way to visit the Wattle Fairies, who lived in that part of Australia now called Victoria. But in consequence of his important and probably far-reaching discovery, he gave up his search for a wife; returned to his father, King Eucalyptus, and sought and obtained permission to undertake the building of a new Fairy City round the Magic Well.

When the City was finished, and the Palace well on the way, he began to think that a Palace without a Princess would be a very poor thing indeed, and more or less useless. Quite naturally therefore, his thoughts reverted to the Wattle Fairies, of whom he had heard it said that they were the most beautiful in all the World. The more he turned the matter over in his mind, the more he desired to make the visit upon which he had started so long ago.

But there were difficulties in the way. To take an escort of sufficient strength to resist possible enemy attacks, meant delaying the erection of the Palace for quite a considerable length of time. In addition, his personal supervision would be lacking, and mistakes might occur.

Pondering over these and other matters, there one day flashed into his mind a rather quaint idea. Without any loss of time he sent for the Engineer Fairy; the one who had made the bamboo squares from which the water was sprayed when the Desert Fairies tried to fill the great Trench with sand. And this is what he said: "Hail! and greeting! O clever Engineer!" And the Engineer replied, "Hail! O Prince! Forever at your service!" "Engineer," said the Prince, "I would that I could take a voyage through the air; and being seized with an idea, I have a mind to discuss it with thee. Listen then, O Engineer! and answer me in good time! As thou wert able to fill the hollow bamboo stalks with water—to the great undoing of our common enemy the Desert Fairies—canst thou not fill some others with air, and, having done so, construct me a carriage that might, like a bird, fly safely overhead?"

As you may well believe, so unexpected a question could not be given an instant answer. It is doubtful indeed if the Prince himself expected any other than he got. What the Engineer Fairy said in reply was: "Permit, O Prince, thy servant time to think, and he will answer thee anon!" "Granted, most worthy Engineer!" said the Prince; "not until thou thyself do broach this matter again shall it be named betwixt us twain." And the Prince rose in sign of dismissal.

When the Engineer Fairy had time to think over the things the Prince had said to him he was greatly pleased at having been called

"most worthy Engineer," and he set about his novel task with the greatest good-will.

Taking the hint given him by Prince Waratah, he got together a goodly number of bamboo stalks, most of them no thicker than a lady's little finger. Carefully removing the inside pith, he first inserted a bark cork into the open end, and then covered it with a seal. The seals he used were made of hard brown gum-nuts; and in order that the bamboo tubes should be perfectly air-tight, he dipped their ends into hot melted beeswax before screwing on the cap-nuts. The effect was just the same as when hot paraffin wax is poured on top of a jar of newly made jam—nothing could either get out or in! Having in this way effectually sealed one end, he then, by means of a little electrical bellows, proceeded to fill the tubes with air, so full that they were almost ready to burst. But before that could happen, he deftly slipped a bark cork into position, swiftly dipped the unsealed end into the hot melted beeswax, and without losing an instant of time, rapidly screwed on the cap-nut, thus sealing that end as closely as the other.

As soon as a sufficient number of various lengths and sizes had been filled with air, they were put together in the shape of a chair, with a box beneath the seat. The chair was then upholstered, or covered with finely woven rushes over a padding of moss; thus making it a very comfortable one in which to sit.

To make it easy to move, four little wheels were attached; and to protect the occupant from the rain or sun a hood could be raised or lowered by simply moving a lever at the left side. This hood, as well as a rug to cover the knees, was made of spider-webs as soft as a baby's hair. The late Queen Victoria had presented to her by the Natives of India an exceedingly fine shawl made of the same kind of material.

But the most curious thing about the chair was its two wings, one at either side. They were as large as the wings of an eagle, and of the same shape, and they were entirely covered with the soft green feathers of rosella parrots. As was seen later on, they could be folded back against the chair, or set to any angle desired, according to the way in which their controlling mechanism was turned.

To the front of the chair four rings were affixed, but for what purpose was not made clear until they were about to be used.

What was then disclosed was this: The chair was in reality a flying carriage; the box underneath being intended to hold whatever the driver might wish to take by way of food, clothes or other things. The four rings in the front were to be used as couplings to which to attach an astonishingly swift team of Blue Kingfishers, sixteen in number, who were to pull the carriage through the air. The Birds' harness was made of light, but strong, honey coloured ropes, twisted out of strands of silk taken from the spiders who spin that kind of thread. The spiders originally came from Papua or New Guinea, and the threads they spin are coarser than those which the silkworms produce; but none the less very useful for such a purpose as that to which they were being put.

Of course it took some time to learn all these details. As a matter of fact, it was not until the Engineer Fairy gave his first demonstration that they were all seen and understood.

What then took place needs but a few words to describe. The Prince, being present, and everything in readiness, the Engineer sat himself in the seat, lifted the silk reins, spoke to the team of Blue Kingfishers, and off they set at a smart run—the flying carriage running on its wheels behind them. Presently they all rose as one bird into the air, and at the self-same moment the carriage also rose, and, with wings outspread, flashed behind the flying Kingfishers as perfectly balanced and as steady as a modern aeroplane.

When in a little time the Engineer Fairy returned, he carefully explained to the Prince all that was required to be done, and very respectfully suggested that he should try his hand.

Nothing loath, apparently, Prince Waratah took the driver's seat, and faithfully and implicitly obeying the instructions given him, managed to make a very skilful flight indeed, all things considered. Later, by much practice, he became so proficient that it was next to impossible for him to come to harm.

It was then that he set out, alone, to visit the Wattle Fairies, covering the distance in an extremely short space of time compared with what would have been necessary had he ridden on horseback

or walked. Maybe you can imagine the consternation and excitement among them the first time they descried him coming through the air. When first sighted he was little more than a speck in the far distance; but all Fairies have very keen eyesight, and watching intently, it was not very long before they could discern the brilliant blue plumage of the Kingfishers, the flashing of their honey-coloured harness as the sunbeams touched it every now and then; and, above all, the Prince himself in the yellow flying carriage with the great green wings attached!

No wonder they felt alarmed. It was enough to strike terror into the heart of anyone who had never seen such a strange and unusual sight before; and had it not been for the wisdom and calmness of their King, it is almost certain they would have fled helter-skelter from the scene. But he, not knowing what else to think, boldly and confidently asserted that the stranger flying towards them must be a messenger from Heaven, and as Heaven was kind, there was really nothing to fear. "Of a truth," said he, "it is more than possible that some great blessing is about to be bestowed upon us. Let us therefore await God's messenger calmly and fearlessly; and in due time we shall learn whatever is His Will."

It thus came about that, when the Prince made a landing, instead of finding those he came to see in a state of panic, they were all drawn up in perfect order, and nothing, save their eyes, gave the slightest sign that anything out of the way was taking place.

As soon as the Prince stepped out of the carriage, however, the King knew him; for the fame of his person and marvellous works had penetrated to the remotest parts of Australia, and he would have been recognised anywhere. Without the slightest hesitation, therefore, the King stepped forward, offered his hand to his distinguished visitor, and in the kindest manner bade him welcome!

Now it so happens that there are a very great number and variety of Wattle Fairies, and they are to be found in practically all parts of Australia. But by general consent, King Acacia and his wife, Queen Cootamundra, are recognised as being at the head of all the tribes. They are an extraordinarily handsome couple; and all their children are very lovely indeed, especially their eldest daughter,

Princess Wattle Blossom! As soon as Prince Waratah saw her he vowed to himself that never in all his life had he seen anyone so gloriously beautiful and charming; for the fact is, that not only is she delightfully sweet to gaze upon, but her manners are so perfect as to make her at once the most kindly and the most gracious Princess in the whole of Fairy Land. Her only fault, if such it can be called, is a tendency to droop her head a little; but this is wholly due to a certain natural shyness, and entirely disappears whenever she speaks or moves. It would have been strange indeed if the Prince had not instantly fallen in love with her—as he did—and had not resolved to some day make her his wedded wife. Nevertheless he paid her many, many visits before the courtship ended, and the marriage actually took place.

But to return to the Palace, about which you were being informed, when the Prince's desire for a wife somehow came into the story.

Apart from the Entrance Hall, which has already been described, there are several rooms that call for more than passing mention. For instance, there is the Laughter Room! That may seem a strange name for a room, but the Prince has very decided opinions on certain matters, and one of his fixed ideas is that, next to Sunshine, Laughter is the finest thing in the World. He calls it "spiritual Sunshine," because, he says, whenever folks laugh, worry and trouble disappear just as quickly as clouds before the sun itself. And so he urges that "everybody, every day, should take a little time for play, to laugh and drive dull care away!" He also says that everybody should have a laughter room in the house; by which he means, of course, that everyone should be careful not to so engage themselves with serious matters, that in their whole make-up there is no room for laughter. People like that, he thinks, do not enjoy life properly; and in order that he and those associated with him might laugh at times, he specially arranged for a Laughter Room.

Already, perhaps, you are wondering what sort of things that room contains? Well, not for long does it remain the same! Changes are constantly taking place, for one cannot continually laugh at the same old joke. But to give you an idea of the kind of thing



"He vowed to himself that never in all his life had he seen anyone so gloriously beautiful and charming."

the Prince thinks funny, here are several that have appeared in the room at one time or another.

Number One: A baby bear, up in a gum tree, has just started to nibble at a particularly tempting leaf when over the edge of it peeps a Daddy Long Legs Spider, who says, "Excuse me! But I know something that you don't know!" "What's that?" says the Bear, but without letting go. "Why!" replies Daddy Long Legs, "You're biting my foot!" "Sorry!" says the Bear, letting go; "I hope I haven't sprained your ankle," and he laughs till the tears run down his face.

Number Two: A fat little Fairy boy, having fallen into the dust, picks himself up and stands crying great big teardrops, that, as they run down his chest, look like the snakes that children make with treacle on nice white slices of bread. Sitting on a fence, watching what is going on, are two Kookaburras, resting a little after having killed a big brown snake. When they see the funny little "Wrigglies," running down the Fairy boy's chest, they burst into such fits of laughter, that they each, so to speak, have to hold their sides, with the result that they both fall off the fence head over heels into the dusty road; and then the boy laughs till he has to sit down!

Number Three: Placed between the forked branches of a tree sits a bird's nest. In it are three little bare-headed baby birds, eyeing in puzzled astonishment a big fat grub that has fallen on the edge of the nest from somewhere overhead, and is doubling away as fast as ever he can, saying as he goes: "Good-bye, Dearies! I'm so glad I saw you! But don't wait for me for dinner! I've simply got to go home at once! And, by the way, don't tell mother you saw me! It would make her feel sorry to think she missed me!"

Number Four: An old Mother Crow—all of whose children were as black as coal—was very jealous of the beauty of the Lyre Bird. Hearing one day that the Stork was bringing a nice new Baby to her hated rival, she placed around her neck a Lyre Bird's tail that she had stolen years before, and watched and waited for the Stork to pass, hoping against hope that he would give her the baby Lyre-bird for herself. But when the Stork came along he saw through the poor make-believe, and though he felt a little sorry for the Crow, he

instantly resolved to punish her for stealing the Lyre Bird's tail, as well as for trying to deceive him! So instead of passing by, he stopped and said, "Hello, Crow! Where did you get the Feather Stole?" And the silly Crow excitedly answered, "Stole it! No, no! I don't mean that! It's not a stole at all; it's a Ruff! But you shouldn't call me a 'Crow'! I'm a Lyre Bird, and I'm waiting for the nice new baby you've got in your basket." " Oh! ho!" retorted the Stork, "you're a Lyre Bird all right; but," he added, "I can't give you the Lyre Bird baby I've got in the basket, because it's promised to somebody else. But," said he, observing her disappointment, and with a humorous glint in his eye, "if you hatch out the egg I'll give you, you may get a surprise!"

Naturally enough, the Old Mother Crow, finding herself unable to deceive the Stork, and fairly burning with curiosity to find out what the surprise might be, took the egg and faithfully promised to sit on it until it was hatched out. And she kept her word, too, sitting on it night and day, with the ruff round her neck in case she might get a young Lyre Bird.

After a number of days she suddenly felt something move, and jumping off her nest in a state of great excitement, looked to see what she had got. To her intense mortification and disgust, she saw nothing in the nest but an ugly young Iguana! She was so annoyed at the trick that had been played upon her, that the tears sprang to her eyes, and she was just about to give vent to her outraged feelings in an angry squawk, when a number of yellow crested Cockatoos, sitting on a tree not far from her nest, seeing what had happened, laughed so loudly and derisively, that the Crow flew from the spot and was never seen again!

The next of the Palace rooms to call for attention is known as the Music Room. In it can be seen every instrument of Fairy music that has ever been invented. And very odd some of them are, too; though they are all capable of giving forth the most tuneful sounds imaginable. Among the many instruments are some so perfectly made that they can imitate Canaries, Larks and Nightingales with an accuracy that is truly fine. By simply touching a tiny spring the mechanism is released, and instantly one may hear a flood of melody

that would cause a Lark, for instance, to believe that one of his fellows was singing near! But the instrument which excites the greatest wonder of them all is called a Melodophone! It is the outcome of so much patience and skill that by a little adjustment it can be made to produce any kind of music—vocal or instrumental—from a single voice singing the simplest melody, up to the grandest orchestral masterpieces. It really is wonderful!

The Prince is very proud of his music room, and takes an immense delight in demonstrating what his collection of musical instruments can do. Further, he everywhere strongly maintains that music is one of the finest aids to happiness. Longfellow, the American poet, must have had much the same thought in his mind when he wrote that priceless little poem, entitled "The Singers," for he makes "The Great Master" say of "The Singers":—

"I gave a various gift to each,
To *charm*, to *strengthen*, and to *teach*,
These are the three great cords of might,
And he whose ear is tuned aright,
Will hear no discord in the three,
But the most perfect harmony!"

In like manner, you will remember how the Prince, in connection with the long, long march to the Magic Well, constantly encouraged his followers to sing the Marching Song he had written for them. And how it cheered and strengthened them. Even when they were almost ready to drop with fatigue, a little singing always seemed to take away the tired feeling and put them in good humour again.

Applying the same idea to matters of greater importance, he says that Music stirs folks to think fine thoughts, prevents them from thinking bad ones, and helps to make them happy. No happy person can possibly be wicked! It is the unhappy who say and do the vile things! Knowing this to be the case, he has very wisely ordered that at least two Bands shall play for his people every day—one in the Fountain Gardens and one on the Lake.

In addition, seeing that all Fairies are very fond of dancing, and that they always dance in circles, he has also provided for them a

couple of Fairy Rings, where they may indulge in their favourite pastime as much and as often as they please.

Lastly, there are five story-tellers, who, although they once had very nice names—and you may be told them later on—were long, long ago called “Touch,” “Taste,” “Sight,” “Smell” and “Hearing,” and every day they have such interesting tales to tell that no one who cares to hearken need ever be dull or depressed. So now you know why it is that all the Prince’s people are so entirely happy and contented.

Of the other rooms of the Palace not yet mentioned there is only time to describe one more on this occasion. It is sometimes called “The Hall of the Captive Sunbeams”; but in reality, it is the Reception Room—that is to say, it is the Room where guests or visitors are received prior to being entertained at dinner, or at a musical evening, or at whatever other form of entertainment is to be given them. The reason for its being popularly named “The Hall of the Captive Sunbeams” is due to the fact that certain portions of the Walls appear to radiate sunlight. This peculiar and striking effect has been brought out by the use of tiles, set like pictures in frames of brightly burnished silver. In the tiles themselves captured sunbeams shimmer and dance perpetually.

How this was done is difficult to say; but the story goes that when making the tiles, the Fairies set them where the Sun’s rays gently touched them every day; and, just as the sun was declining, they each day swiftly brushed the fronts of the tiles with a kind of liquid glaze that kept the light beneath it. When, in this way, several thicknesses of light were captured, so to speak, the tiles were burned in specially prepared kilns, and to the very great joy of the Fairy Craftsmen it was found, when finished, that one sunbeam seemed to be for ever chasing another over and over the face of the tiles! There is but one other notable feature about the “Hall of the Captive Sunbeams”—it is that the more the place is filled with gaiety and laughter the more merrily do the sunbeams seem to pour forth a running, rippling tide of light, to enhance and stimulate the general jollity!

And now you have some faint conception of the beauty and the glory of the Prince’s Palace, some little idea of its furnishing for use

and entertainment, and, above all, some grasp of the outstanding features which make it not only the most noticeable structure in the Fairy City, but of such unequalled originality and excellence as to be without a rival anywhere.

There it stands, a perfectly modelled two-storied white marble building surmounted by a roof of reddish sunset gold. On its front is the nobly pillared verandah and balcony; and setting it off, like a splendid frame to a valuable painting, are the widespread and delightful garden grounds which entirely surround it.

Seeing it thus, as you now see it in your mind's eye, on the evening of a lovely Autumn day very shortly after it was finished, Prince Waratah declared it perfect, save and except in *one* particular: it lacked a worthy mistress. That, however, was an omission which could be remedied; and as he had already made up his mind who was to be asked to fill the position, he there and then began to consider the many things that must be done before the happy event. So commenced the long series of careful preparations which were to end in the most unique and entrancing experience of his life—his marriage to the Princess Wattle Blossom!

Of that marriage, and of all that took place in connection with it, you shall be fully informed when time and circumstances permit. Meanwhile, please remember, that in the Prince's Palace of twenty-four rooms—one for each hour of the day—some are for work, some are for pleasure, and some are for sleep! With you it is just the same! There is a time for work, a time for pleasure, and a time for sleep—and it is sleep-time now! And so-good-night! Good-night!! Good-night!!!



THE PRINCE'S MARRIAGE

*Within a garden glorious, beside the Magic Well,
There stands a Palace Beautiful, wherein a Prince doth dwell!
And he, his dreamings over,—finding all but one come true,
In fancy gazes forward, to a World of roseate hue!
And there beside him standing, in her royal robes of state,
In visions truly splendid, sees his soul's most beauteous mate!
And all her gentle charm of mind, and all her dainty grace,
But match the matchless beauty of her sweet and lovely face.
And he, enraptured at the sight, upheld by Princely pride,
Prepares to wed, in fitting state, his own appointed bride!*

IN concluding the story of the Prince's Palace a reference was made to the Prince's marriage, and a promise made that some day you should be told all about that happy event, and of all that happened in connection with it.

Well, listen!

As you will remember, when the Palace was finished, the Prince pronounced it perfect save in one particular; it lacked a Mistress! To remedy that defect he had made up his mind to marry Princess Wattle Blossom; and in order that there might be no delay, he immediately set out in his famous flying carriage to visit King Acacia—the head of the Wattle Fairies—and ask for his eldest daughter's hand in marriage.

On his arrival, the King, as always, very graciously received him, for he liked him greatly, and, when he had heard his request, very willingly consented to give his daughter to the Prince provided she herself were agreeable.

This condition the Prince very properly accepted; and as he felt that in the course of his previous visits he had already made a favour-

able impression, he had little doubt but that the lovely Princess Wattle Blossom would agree to marry him. None the less, before presenting himself with the object of putting the question to her, he very carefully saw to it that in every detail of his clothing and personal appearance, he should look his very, very best. That, for Prince Waratah, was not a difficult matter, for he was really uncommonly handsome. His short, curly, red hair, fine face, and graceful figure would have made him a striking personality anywhere; but when clothed in his dark green coat, rose pink vest, and white silk knee breeches, he looked exactly what he was—a great and noble Prince.

As for the Princess Wattle Blossom, surely someone must have given her a hint of the Prince's coming and of the question he was likely to ask, for never before had she looked so lovely and sweet! Dressed in a trailing gown of grey-green silk, embroidered and adorned with golden tracteries in front, she modestly stood waiting his arrival, her beautiful face suffused in blushes and smiles, whilst her golden hair, seeming to have escaped its bounds, went sunning over her shoulders in a perfect cascade of shimmering curls!

The Prince was enchanted! So much so, that as he stooped to kiss her hand, he could barely murmur his greeting. But it took him only an instant to recover himself, and in a few minutes his ready wit and fascinating conversation held the Princess positively spellbound. Never before had he ever mentioned the Palace to her; but now, with very great art and even greater tact, he skilfully described its beauties, its particularly fine setting in ideal garden grounds; its splendid rooms, and their unique furnishings; and the charming views to be had from its pillared balcony. So enraptured was the Princess with the picture that he drew, that more than once she innocently ejaculated, "Oh, how I should love to live in such a glorious home!"

On the last occasion upon which she so spoke, the Prince, having finished his description, tenderly took her hand in his and smilingly replied, "And so you may—on *one* condition!" And the Princess, instantly perceiving the position in which she had unwittingly placed herself, archly answered back: "You mean that I must pay for the privilege, I suppose!" "Yes," retorted the prince, with rising ardour, "you must give me what is worth to me more than all the World holds

—you must give me yourself! Will you marry me? Will you take me for your husband, and be my own dear, dear wife?”

And the Princess, who had loved him from the very first, answered, “ Yes, My Prince, for I love you truly, and will never cease to love you until the end of time!” Thus the Princess Wattle Blossom became the Prince's promised bride; and from that day forth, many were the preparations made for the wedding.

Now the Prince had stipulated, that contrary to usual custom, the wedding was to take place, not at the home of the bride's parents, but at the Palace. This, he explained, was in order that King Acacia, Queen Cootamundra, and as many of their relatives and friends as cared to accept the invitation, might not only see the future home of the bride, but the Fairy City itself—that wonderland of Fairyland about which they had all heard something more or less fascinating and attractive.

In consequence of this arrangement, what may be termed the “ Cards of Invitation,” were issued by the Prince. They were enclosed in a woven envelope made of the very finest green rushes, and they consisted of two broad eucalyptus leaves fastened together with twisted cords of spiders' silk. On the outside of the first leaf was painted the Prince's Crest; a red Waratah rising above two green leaves of the plant on which it blooms. On the face of these leaves, in letters of gold, his motto was written, “ I live to serve!” On the inside of the second leaf the actual invitation to the wedding appeared. It, also, was written in golden letters. The wording of the invitation was very brief, however, for the Fairies, like the ancients, generally use but few words to express themselves.

In this respect they are not unlike the early peoples, who, away back at the beginning of things—long before writing was invented, only spoke nouns or names. Verbs, adverbs and prepositions have all been added since. But it is a singular fact that the words then used are at once the most expressive, the most simple and the most beautiful in the language. Moreover, they are all words of one syllable! Earth, Air, Sea, Sky, Light, Cold, Heat, Sun, Moon, Day, Night, Man, God! Another remarkable thing about these words is that they all make an appeal to one or more of the five senses. For this reason it

is not possible to "explain" them; the only way in which they can be comprehended or understood is by private personal experience. Thus, no one can possibly understand what light is except by seeing it, or heat or cold except by feeling it. Similarly, without the sense of taste, sweet or sour has no meaning, and in like manner only those who can hear know what music is, and only those who have a sense of smell are able to enjoy the perfume of a flower.

To return to the point, however, the "Cards of Invitation" were all sent out on the same day—a hundred or two. They were taken to those for whom they were intended by a truly splendid lot of Bronze-wing pigeons.

The Fairies can teach birds to do nearly anything, and these beautiful Bronze-wing pigeons were constantly used in much the same way as people use Carrier Pigeons to take messages from place to place.

In this case, instead of wrapping the message round the bird's-leg, the envelope containing the card was strung like a lady's purse around the Bronze-wing pigeon's neck.

When they were all ready, it was a really charming sight to see them rise, and, wheeling in the air, break into four groups, that, with the swiftness of light, sped away North, East, West and South, until they were all lost to view.

When they returned they brought the answers with them; and, as the Prince had expected, the refusals were very few. This was partly due to the fact that with each invitation a letter was forwarded saying that, if it were accepted, a flying-carriage would be sent to bring the acceptors to the wedding and to take them home again. The possibility of enjoying so novel a method of travel was in itself an inducement to accept; though the vast majority were equally anxious to learn something of the Magic Well, or the Fairy City, about both of which they had heard so many thrilling accounts.

The reason why the Prince was able to promise them all the use of flying carriages was because he had had his engineers at work upon quite a number ever since his own was made, and, as the result of many experiments, it had been found possible to make a carriage that would carry three, two in addition to a driver. They were not as

fast as the single seaters, but they were quite safe, and with Fairies trained to drive them—Magpie teams for daylight travelling, and Owl teams for night-work—there really was no danger whatever!

After all the answers had been received, and the Prince knew exactly how many guests to expect, he himself gave instructions to the Palace Cooks to prepare a gorgeous wedding feast. There was to be no stint of anything, and everything was to be carried out in the finest style known to the Chefs. Fruits and sweetmeats, and dainties and delicacies of every class and kind under the sun were ordered to be got ready for the "great day." Flowers too! The rarest orchids and the most delicately perfumed blossoms; golden wattle in particular! Music also! The sweetest strains the Fairy Bands knew how to play; soft, engaging airs such as a bride *should* hear on the most eventful day of her life. In short, everything that could be thought of to please, amuse and gratify the wedding guests, was, by the express orders of the Prince, either at once obtained, or the necessary steps taken to see that it would be ready on the Wedding Day!

And when, at last, the day arrived, the excitement in and around the Fairy City was simply intense.

The day before, in the morning, came the Prince's Father and Mother, King Eucalyptus and Queen Fici-folia, together with their officers and attendants. It was said that the Prince had been given his good looks by his lovely mother; she whose superb figure and soft red hair were the pride of all the Eucalypts! They came thus early in order to be ready, on behalf of the Prince, to receive and welcome all his guests.

To them were given apartments in the Eastern side of the Palace.

In the afternoon of the same day came King Acacia, Queen Cootamundra, Princess Wattle Blossom and her sisters, and several officers and attendants of their household. They had been asked to come the day before the wedding to enable the Princess to be thoroughly rested and refreshed prior to the ceremony.

To them was assigned a suite of rooms in the Western side of the Palace.

For some of the officers of both the Royal Households, as well as for those who, coming from a great distance, could not return the same day, special sleeping rooms had been erected in the Palace Gardens.

At this stage it has to be mentioned, that in addition to their other improvements, all the Prince's newest flying carriages were fitted with fairy wireless. This enabled any of the drivers to send a message to the Prince whenever it was necessary so to do. And it was indeed fortunate that such was the case, for although it had been arranged that the Princess Wattle Blossom was to arrive the day before the wedding, within about half an hour of the time that she was to have landed, something happened which nearly prevented her from ever reaching the Fairy City at all.

To properly understand the story of what occurred, it is necessary to go back a little, and to remember that the malicious Desert Fairies had been twice defeated—once, when they had attacked the Prince and his followers whilst on their way to the Magic Well; and once, when they had tried to stop the making of the Lake which now encircles Fairy Island. They were very sore at having been thwarted in their spiteful efforts, and had resolved that if ever they got a chance, they would be revenged upon the Prince in consequence. Thus, though they were very secret about it, they were always on the lookout to do him harm.

For a very long time, nothing took place which gave them the slightest opening to put their wicked wishes into play. Then, by the merest accident, they learned that Prince Waratah was about to be married, and "putting two and two together," they made up their minds to steal the Princess Wattle Blossom, and so rob him of his intended wife. And strange as it may seem, had it not been that the carriage in which she was travelling had its fairy wireless set in working order, the plot they laid would certainly have succeeded. Even as it was, her adventure was an exciting one; and, while it lasted, very, very trying.

How the Desert Fairies came to find out that the Prince was about to be married, was, to say the least of it, somewhat peculiar.

One of the bronze-wing pigeons, carrying an invitation to a relative of the Prince's Mother, who lived in Western Australia, had almost flown across the desert, when, to his horror, high above his head he saw the outstretched hovering form of a great golden eagle. Instantly he knew that he would be killed, but true to his trust, he slipped the invitation over his head, and letting it fall to the ground in the hope that it would be found and forwarded by another messenger, sped ahead as fast as his weary wings would bear him.

But in point of speed, even the freshest, swiftest bronze-wing pigeon is very slow compared with the mighty onrush of a powerful eagle, and almost before the Prince's bird had time to try and escape, the eagle dropped upon his back, and with one stroke of his curved and cruel beak, struck the pigeon dead, and holding him in his strong talons, sped away and away until he was entirely lost to sight.

Now the card of invitation which the bronze-wing pigeon had let fall was picked up by a passing Desert Fairy. He immediately took it to the head of the tribe, who forthwith called his followers about him to consider the news. Having gained such an important piece of information as the invitation disclosed, they were put upon their metal to discover everything else about the marriage that it was possible to learn. By dint of much spying and listening they at last got to know the whole of the details. They thereupon decided to waylay the Princess on her journey to the Fairy City, and by all the means at their command, beat down whatever escort was provided, and carry her away.

In some respects they were luckier than they could have expected to be. Their great difficulty was how to bring the flying-carriage to the ground; for if they could not stop it, they could not capture the Princess.

After a good deal of hard thinking, they finally decided to station a certain number of their members at different points along the route, somewhere near the places at which it was believed the birds that drew the carriages would have to stop and rest.

As it chanced, at the third stopping place, the carriage that contained the Princess and her father King Acacia, had somehow become separated from the others which were carrying Queen Cootamundra

and her daughters. This was an opportunity not to be missed, and in order to prevent the carriage from again rising into the air, they tried to blind the driver with little gusts of gritty sand. Had they succeeded in doing this, it was their intention to rush in, seize the Princess Wattle Blossom, and compel her to go with them. But the driver was happily able to defeat them in their object by using a fine silk handkerchief to protect his eyes and face.

Finding themselves foiled in this endeavour, they then sought to upset the carriage by bringing up a blustery wind to rush against it from the side. Again they failed. Hastily changing their tactics, just as the carriage was rising into the air, they sent the wind beneath it in a wild attempt to tip it over on its face; but as before, their efforts proved resultless. Very much disheartened, there was nothing left for them to do but to sulkily stand and watch the flying carriage speeding on its way.

From this time onward, everything would have gone well but for something which the Princess asked the driver to do. They were then within about half an hour of the Fairy City, and getting along famously. All at once the Princess espied a sight the like of which she had never seen before. Looking down upon the earth she saw amid the dreary wastes of sand a splendid patch of green plentifully splashed with red. Rather excitedly calling the driver's attention to it, she asked him to descend in order that she might examine it more closely. This he did, stopping right beside a very large number of plants that are known as Sturt's Desert Pea, all in a flaming riot of glorious blossoms. The Princess was enchanted; and very incautiously stepping out of the carriage, she delightedly proceeded to gather an armful of the truly beautiful flowers.

Meantime, quite a number of the vicious Desert Fairies, hoping that some such thing would happen, had hidden themselves among the plants. As they hate the Garden Fairies and all their works, it was their intention to destroy the blossoms in any case; but believing that they would prove attractive to the Princess, they simply bided their time. Seeing her walking along the edge of the desert peas, absorbed in picking the deep red clustering blooms, they suddenly rushed out from their hiding places, seized her by the hands and arms,



"They suddenly rushed from their hiding places and started pushing and dragging her over the sandy desert."

and started pushing and dragging her over the sandy desert. Her startled cries awoke her father, who, tired with travelling, had fallen asleep in his seat. The driver did not need to be wakened. Watching the Princess plucking the flowers, he had seen what had taken place. In a flash he realised the danger she was in, and without an instant's hesitation he sent an S.O.S. message to the Prince at Fairy Island. And it was well that he did; for the very next moment, some of the Desert Fairies who had been left behind to prevent him going to the assistance of the Princess, dashed a swirling, blinding cloud of dust full into his face. They then retreated as fast as they could, throwing up a regular wall of sand and dust behind them as they went. This device prevented the driver from seeing in which direction the Princess was being taken, and left him almost helpless.

To make matters worse, when King Acacia realised that the Princess was being stolen, he was almost distracted, and nothing the driver could say or do made any impression on his mind. He was so distraught, so full of anger, that he appeared to be unable to listen, and stamped up and down in utter helplessness.

The driver tried to get him back into the carriage so that they might at least follow and attempt to rescue his daughter. But it was all to no purpose; and as he dared not leave the King behind, he also was compelled to remain inactive and to do nothing. And all the time, despite her pitiful struggles, the Princess was being taken further and further away. The situation was indeed desperate, and it wrung the driver's heart to think that like a ninny he must stand about in stupid idleness. Oh, how he prayed that the message he had sent the Prince might safely reach him!

Very fortunately it did! And still more fortunately, the Prince had contemplated going out to meet the Princess and her father as they neared the City, and so was ready with his famous team of blue kingfishers to make an immediate start. Pausing only to give instructions for a band of Shower Fairies to follow after him as hard as they could, he leaped into his flying-carriage, and almost in the twinkling of an eye, was off to save the Princess from an awful fate.

If ever the Kingfishers put forth their best speed they did it that afternoon. So swiftly did they fly that within twenty minutes after

he had received the wireless message, Prince Waratah, flying high above the dust, had sighted the Princess and her kidnappers, and was bearing down upon the group with the swiftness of a shooting star.

Howling with rage and disappointment, the Desert Fairies loosed a tearing wind against the Prince, and filling the air with sand and dust, and even little pebbles, desperately strove to prevent him getting near them. But what cared the Prince for such an attack! Urging his obedient Kingfishers upward, he shot over the top of the flying dust and sand, and dashing downward with amazing speed, sprang out of his carriage and rushed upon his foes. Craven cowards that they are, they fled before him in all directions, just as the Shower Fairies, rapidly following after the Prince, sent their pelting rain-drops hurtling after them.

Very, very timely was the Shower Fairies' aid, and the Prince was very grateful for it.

Tenderly lifting the exhausted Princess in his arms he bore her to his carriage; and taking out a little phial of cordial, mixed it with some water from the Magic Well, and giving it to her to drink, in a minute or two she was her smiling self again.

She then told him how she had come to be captured. It was because she had, unthinkingly, left the carriage to get some flowers. Now, strewn about the desert over which she had been dragged, they all lay dead!

The Prince at once resolved that she should have some others to take their place. After resting a little while, they, therefore, returned to the spot where they could be obtained, and the Prince himself gathered her a giant posy. Then, seating her beside her father in the carriage in which she had been travelling, he placed the lovely blossoms in her arms, contriving as he did so, to kiss the dainty hand that on the morrow was to be given him in marriage.

On the wedding morning, from quite an early hour, the sky was filled with flying carriages bringing in the guests.

Perhaps you can imagine the curiosity and wonder with which the arrival of each newcomer was viewed by the Fairy Folk. No doubt the deportment and demeanour of all were silently admired or criticised; whilst the mere novelty of seeing distinguished personages

whom they had never seen before must have been considered quite a treat!

By noon, however, the last of the wedding guests had arrived, and all were happily preparing for the ceremony, which was timed to take place at four o'clock precisely.

The ceremony arrangements were of the simplest character. On a raised platform reached by steps, beneath a spreading blackwood tree, in the middle of a velvety green lawn, stood the "Official Recorder," he who causes to be recorded everything that must be kept in what are called the "Archives"; in other words, the place in which public records and historic documents are safely stored.

A little behind him, at a table, sat his clerk, ready to write down in letters of gold on this occasion, an official record of whatever was said or done.

At the right hand side of the "Official Recorder," stood Prince Waratah and his "First Friend," Prince Floral—the last remaining member of the Royal House of the Garden Fairies. It was a very nice thought on the part of Prince Waratah to have for his "best man," so to speak, the somewhat lonely but lovable Prince of the scattered Garden Fairies, and when it became known that this was to be the case, there was not a Garden Fairy throughout the whole of Australia who did not feel a thrill of pride and joy in consequence!

Facing the "Official Recorder," to the right and left, in two great triangles, sat the wedding guests. There was thus formed a middle pathway up which the Bridal Party was to come at the appointed hour. Whilst waiting for that auspicious moment all were interested to note the singular grace and beauty of the two noble Princes.

The Bridegroom, Prince Waratah, was naturally the first to come under observation. Taller than the average, his face aglow with animation and happiness, he was in truth a striking figure. He was superbly dressed! Upon his head—above the curls of glossy red it did not try to hide—he wore a golden coloured cap, from which there rose a splendid feather of the very shade that matched his hair. His coat was of a glossy green colour; the collar, edges and pockets being trimmed with a broad band of golden embroidery. At his throat and

wrists he wore the most beautiful white lace. His vest was of a rich yellow; and his knee-breeches and stockings were of delicate white. On his feet were shoes of the same colour as his vest; whilst his garters were of a deep-sea blue, fastened with diamond clasps!

Prince Floral was similarly attired as far as style was concerned, except that his coat was the colour of golden brown wall flowers, and his vest a perfect pink.

When the Bride appeared, leaning on her father's arm, it was seen that her dress was of the purest white silk, into which was worked in golden thread, the daintiest sprays of Golden Wattle. And very lovely did she look, her face suffusing with blushes as she felt the gaze of so many pairs of eyes.

Two of her sisters were in attendance as "First Ladies," or Bridesmaids. And they, too, were very beautiful in their dresses of hydrangea-blue, decorated and adorned with sashes and knots of faintest pink.

On their arrival at the platform, Prince Waratah stepped swiftly down, and, taking the Princess by the hand, together they mounted the steps and stood before the "Official Recorder." In a clear, ringing voice the Prince then said to that Officer: "I, Prince Waratah, desire you to note that I, here and now, take the Princess Wattle Blossom, to be my wife!" The Princess immediately added: "And I, Princess Wattle Blossom, desire you to note, that I, here and now, take the Prince Waratah to be my husband and my Lord." They both then turned towards the assembled guests, and the "Official Recorder," standing a little to one side, raised his voice, and said, "Be it known that, before me, this day, the Prince Waratah and the Princess Wattle Blossom, have become husband and wife. So be it! Praise be to God!" And so, amidst a burst of acclamation and applause, the wedding ceremony ended!

Then followed a long, long series of congratulations and good wishes ere it was possible to adjourn to the great dining-room in which the wedding feast was spread. It must have been quite six o'clock before everyone was in place. Any observant person, looking round the room, would then have noted a curious fact. The number seated at every table except the one at which the Bride and Bride-



"Together they mounted the steps and stood before the 'Official Recorder.'"

groom sat, was exactly seven. At the chief table there were nine. This arrangement was in no wise accidental. In point of fact it was done deliberately, the Fairies, like the ancient peoples, having the greatest regard and respect for numbers and their meanings. To them, three is the perfect number—and three multiplied by three, which is nine, the limit to which perfection can go. Never at any time therefore do they seat together more than nine; and then only when they are very distinguished persons indeed. In like manner they look upon seven as God's own number; the one that means rest after labour; for, as you will remember, in six days God made Heaven and Earth, and on the seventh day He rested. Furthermore, they know that just as in the Alphabet, A, B and C, contain the lines and curves of all the other letters, so in ordinary numbers, 1, 2 and 3, contain all the lines and curves of all the others. But what impresses them most are the following two remarkable facts. Firstly, if you double over the first three numbers, you cover up 4, 5 and 6, and arrive at 7, the perfect number, the one that in itself holds the lines and curves of all the others! Secondly, if you double over the first three letters of the Alphabet you cover up D E F, and arrive at G, the seventh letter, the perfect letter that in itself embraces the lines and curves of all the others—the initial letter of the mightiest name in the Universe: its Creator, God!

The Fairies, however, were so used to being seated in the way described, and so understood the reason for it, that in effect they took no notice; but gave themselves up to the full enjoyment of the splendid fare provided for them.

After they had partaken of as much as they desired, the Prince, always alert, nodded his head to the waiting attendants, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the tables were cleared, and there began the various entertainments that were to grace the evening.

First, the Band, which played a most engaging selection of soft harmonious airs, sweet enough to have made the stars of Heaven brighten could they have heard them. Then came the first of the "Five Story Tellers"—the most popular persons in Fairyland.

These Story Tellers, who need never lack an audience, are the most ancient of all the Fairies—so old (though they do not look it)

that they seem to have existed ever since the World began. What they were first called, no one now remembers. Some think they once had names which meant Faith, Love, Truth, Knowledge and Art; but be that as it may, to-day they are called "Touch," "Taste," "Sight," "Smell," and "Hearing." Whenever they tell a story they always begin it in the same way. First they give the title of the tale, and then, as in all Fairy Stories, they say: "Once upon a time, a long while ago," such and such a thing happened. So, when "Touch" began his Tale, he being first to be asked, this is what he said:—

THE SKYLARK'S STORY

"Once upon a time, a long while ago, I was passing over a field. Pausing for a moment to look at a flower, a Lark fell palpitating at my feet, hot and weary with singing. Taking him up in my left hand, whilst I gently fanned him with my right, I said, 'Tell me, Lark, what is your story, and why do you sing?' And when he was cool again, this is the tale he told: —

"Once I was an egg, and I lay in a tiny nest among the grasses of the field. The shell, within which I lived, was very small and somewhat dark, but warm! Occasionally, however, I could see just a little glimpse of light; and now and then I could indistinctly hear my father talking or singing to my mother, But I couldn't move, and I couldn't speak.

"Then came a day when I thought I heard an awful crash. It was so loud and thunderous that it seemed to me as if the sky had fallen. At the time it happened I was almost asleep, I think, for I appeared to have waked with such a sudden start, that I pushed my beak cleaned through the shell in which I lived; broke it in half; and there I sat, blinking and winking at the sunlight in the most stupid manner conceivable.

"In a minute or two I saw my mother! She was looking down at me as proudly as if I were an eagle instead of a wee little lark—almost naked, and so weak, that I couldn't stand up, no matter how hard I tried. In fact, every time I tried, I fell back so funnily that my mother laughed a little, and that made me cry!



Touch tells a story.

“ ‘ When she saw me crying she said: “ Never mind, little one! You’ll soon do much more than stand up—you’ll fly! And now just lie down until I go and get you your breakfast!” and off she flew! My word, she *was* quick! I hardly seemed to have lain down before she was back with it—the queerest little pinky-red wriggly thing you ever saw in your life; but so soft and juicy looking that, when she put it on my tongue, I just popped it down my throat and gave a little squeak for more!

“ ‘ But that’s a long while ago!

“ ‘ As I grew and got some feathers, my mother taught me first to walk a little, then to run, and finally to fly! Very well do I remember my first little flight. I could scarcely have gone a dozen yards, when down I came plop! right on my mother’s back! How she got beneath me, goodness only knows! But it was a good thing for me that she did, for when I saw where I should have fallen; it was right on top of an old spiky post in a fence—and I certainly would have been hurt.

“ ‘ One day my father came to me and said: “ Up you come with me, little laddie! You’re old enough now to get into the air, and to get your first singing lesson!”

“ ‘ I fairly worshipped my father! He really was wonderful, for on all the days when my mother was feeding me or teaching me to fly, we could just see him away up overhead, singing rapturously.

“ ‘ And the songs he sang! The notes came raining down like dew-drops, diamonds, rubies, sapphires. They were made of sunshine, jewels, and running water! You never heard the like of them! And my mother, who loved him to distraction, would often stop in her teaching and just gaze up at him as if he were an angel!

“ ‘ But, as I was saying, my father came to me for my first skyward lesson. How I loved it! Round and up, and up and round we went, until we appeared to be miles and miles above the earth!

“ ‘ And, looking about me, at the sun, the sky, and the good green earth, all at once I knew what everything meant, and almost without knowing it, I opened my throat and sang till I dropped!

“ ‘ Very fortunately my father, who probably guessed what would happen, was watching closely, and the very instant that my wings

gave way he caught me on his back, and down we came in the most graceful spirals you ever saw! Day after day we did the same thing, until at last, strong of wing, and mellow throated as my father, he gave me the right to soar and sing whenever I pleased!

“As to why I sing, I can only say that everything in the World seems so good, so lovely and so bright, that I cannot help it. Besides, I love to hear my own voice, it is so sweet. And I rather think that the Angels of Heaven, looking down as I often do at this beautiful earth, must find it not only easy to sing, but must simply long for the time when they can come and teach their songs to human beings,—just as my father taught me his!”

So concluded the story.

Then someone sang a Fairy song, and everybody joined in the chorus.

After that the Prince asked one of the Couriers—one of those who are sent out with important letters—to repeat something he once heard at a concert. And this is what the Courier said:—

“Once upon a time, a long while ago, I stopped to listen to a children’s concert, and there I heard a bright-faced boy recite this tale:—

GOURDS AND QUINCES

Two Beetles brown, came up to Town,
Beneath a load of pumpkins;
With Simon Strong they rode along,
A pair of Country Bumpkins.
And though ’twas hot they murmured not,
Nor thought upon the weather;
For their delight, both day and night,
Was just to be together!

And this was so, as you may know,
Because, by love incited,
Their wedding tour began the hour
That they were thus united!

And so, 'twould seem, a foolish dream,
By fate and Fortune aided,
Began to be a true decree,
When they the cart invaded.

For Beetles' tastes, whate'er else wastes,
Run much to fruity flavours;
And so, mayhap, they hoped to tap
The best of orchard savours,
When in the straw they thought they saw,—
(And this the truth evinces!)
Amid the heap of pumpkins cheap,
The gleam of golden quinces!

But hopes are vain and fraught with pain
When backed by judgments hasty;
And yellow gourds are hard as boards,
And not like quinces, tasty!
And so these twain must Town attain,
By love sustained, but thinner;
In hopes at least, that they might feast,
When Simon stopped for dinner!

Yet, sad to say, alack aday!
The journey being ended,
Upon their backs, on some old sacks,
They found themselves extended!
And then, instead of meat and bread,
Or food of more pretension,—
They heard the squeal of pigs at meal:
Oh, sorry, sad declension!

For to a pen of porkers ten,
Old Simon tipped his pumpkins,
And with the load, to that abode,
Were thrown the Beetle-bumpkins!

To them, indeed, an awful meed
Of rude and rough requiting—
When they had schemed and fondly dreamed
Of pelf, with love uniting!

And so, 'tis plain—that those who gain
The World's rewards and pleasures
Can ne'er be sure they them secure,
By raiding *others* treasures!
And one more fact remains intact:
(The doubters *this* convinces!)
That those who rise to high emprise,
Know yellow gourds from quinces!

At the conclusion of the Recitation a number of what might be termed the brighter members of the audience took occasion to comment on it; but, judging by what they said to each other, they had not much sympathy for the silly little beetles.

When they were quite quiet again, "Taste," the second of the Five Story Tellers, began his tale as follows:—

THE GRAPE VINE'S STORY

"Once upon a time, a long while ago, faint and weary from the heat of the day, I sheltered myself under a shady vine. When I looked up I saw beautiful bunches of grapes—like ladies' fingers—hanging all about me. A bunch I took, and found them so delicious that I said to the vine, 'Tell me, Grape Vine, what is your story, and why do you grow such grapes?' And this is what the Grape Vine said:—

" 'My story is a very simple one! When I was a little hard white pip I was covered with pale, firm flesh, and my green skin was as smooth as silk! As I grew older my flesh got softer, and my skin expanded to allow for my growth.

" 'About this time the Sun began to take notice of me; and in a playful way he took to patting my cheeks every time he passed. In

spite of myself I always blushed; and, somehow, try as I might, I never could get rid of the blush again. The result was, that the oftener I blushed the deeper my colour became.

“ ‘One day he stopped to tease me about it, and I got so annoyed that I became almost red with indignation. At that very moment, a pretty little lady, passing by, evidently seeing my plight, promptly plucked me from my place and popped me in her mouth! For a moment or two I was pleased to be out of the sight of the Sun; but presently I got so warm that I was glad to be taken out, even if it was only to be stared at by my tiny lady friend!

“ ‘It was then that I had time to notice that she had lovely blue eyes, milk-white teeth, and the prettiest little fingers in the world! “Poor little grape,” said she; “I don’t suppose you know I’m going to eat you; but I am! What a pity you are so round and red! I wonder why you don’t grow as long as my finger? You would be far prettier if you were shaped like a lady’s finger instead of like an owl’s eye!”

“ ‘And she laughed so suddenly that I nearly fell out of her hand with fright!

“ ‘Now, although she said that funny thing about me, I was so charmed with the way in which she spoke, that I there and then resolved, if ever I got the chance, to try and grow in the shape she had suggested.

“ ‘But an instant after I thought that the end of the world had come, for, with a smart little nip of her teeth she cut right into my flesh, and in less than a minute she had stripped me bare, and I lay in the palm of her hand, nearly frightened to death!

“ ‘“Poor little seed,” she murmured, looking down at me strangely, “I wonder if you know what has happened to you, and whether you’ve got any life left! Well, *you* can’t say, and *I* don’t know!” And with that she blew me off the palm of her hand into the soft brown earth of her father’s orchard!

“ ‘There I lay for many a day, waiting for something, though what it was I couldn’t understand.

“ ‘By-and-by the winter rains began to fall, and the soil about me tightened its grip.

" ' At first I didn't like it; but I soon found out that if I wanted to be cosy and warm I had better not wriggle and struggle, as at first I felt inclined. Oh, how good and kind I found the Earth to be! For quite a long time she let me sleep, and when it was time to wake she softly whispered: " Feet down! Head up! Head up! Feet down!" And almost without knowing what I was doing, I felt myself pressing downwards with two little legs, and pushing upwards with a little green head as hard as ever I could.

" ' The moment I got my head through the soil I knew that I had done the right thing! There was the orchard I knew so well, and there, too, the Sun, who somehow seemed different, for instead of patting me on the cheeks as he used to do, he kept on saying, " Come up! Climb! Climb! If you want to get on in the world you must climb!"

" ' Well, as it seemed the right thing to do, climb I did; and I kept on climbing, until one day my little lady's father stopped to examine me.

" ' " Oh, ho!" said Mr. Orchardist, " what have we here? A good-looker right enough! I must watch you grow, my lady!"

" ' And he did too, giving me regular attention, treatment and care, until I began to feel that the deepest wish of my heart would be gratified. And sure enough it was, for in my fourth year, much to my little lady's delight, I began to grow a grape she had never seen before—a long and shapely grape, with just the daintiest pink flesh on its delicate skin!

" ' Quite unknown to her, Mr. Orchardist had also seen what was taking place, and one day, to my intense joy, he said to the little lady, " Come hither, little lady, and show me your hand!" And as she held it out, he dropped into it my first bunch of grapes, saying, as he did so: " At last! At long last! Here are My Lady's Fingers!"

" ' As to why I grow such grapes there is surely no need to say. It is to perpetuate the memory of the sweet little lady on whose hand I saw the fingers which inspired me to imitate their dainty shape.' "

So ended the story.

There followed a second selection by the Band; after which the Prince announced that a " Storks' Companion"—one of the Fairies

who goes with a Stork when he takes a new baby home—would say what he overheard on one well remembered occasion.

And this is what the “Storks’ Companion” said:—

WHEN THE STORK CALLED

“Once upon a time, a long while ago, I went with a Stork to deliver a new baby. Next morning, the Nurse told the baby’s father and some friends who had called, all about it. And this is what she said:—

‘The Boy’ and ‘The Girl’ were both abed,

Their prayers were said;

And each little curly silken head

Was laid on its own downy pillow!

When, sakes alive!

Like bees from a hive,

With a buzz and a boom that seemed to run

From the earth to the sea, and from there to the sun,

There came such a knock!

Such a sharp rat-tat!

That the boy woke up and said, ‘What’s that?’

And the girl from her bed jumped out on her hat!

(A ridiculous place, you must all agree,

On the bedroom floor for a hat to be!)

And all the while, that rapid rat-tat,

Made their little hearts beat ‘a-pity-poor-pat!’

Then the queerest of sounds

On their quick ears fell!

It was not a cry;

And ’twas hardly a yell!

But they both felt sure, as they sat so still,

’Twas the Stork had knocked with his hard long bill!

But oh, it was an aching time!

The Hall clock *twice* rang out its chime

Ere Grandma came, and to them told,

How the Stork had come through the night so cold!

Had called and said,
As they lay abed—
As sound asleep as if they were dead;
' Here's the baby for which you prayed!
A Baby Brother!
I'll leave him with mother!
Treat him kindly and be not afraid!
Then, like a star
That shoots afar;
Away he flew on pinions light,
Oh, so swiftly through the night;
Right away on aery wing,
Through the pale moon's Fairy Ring;
On to where the Babies wait,
Just beside God's Golden Gate!"

Everybody seemed to be pleased with the effort of the "Storks' Companion"; but not to have a break in the night's proceedings, "Sight," the third of "The Five Story Tellers," was called upon to tell a tale.

And this is what he said:—

THE RAINDROP'S STORY

"Once upon a time, a long while ago, I stood upon a hill-top, watching the rain clouds drifting past. Suddenly a raindrop fell into the palm of my outstretched hand, and lay there looking at me! He was so clear and cool, so bright-eyed and so fearless, that I said to him: 'Tell me, Raindrop, what is your story, and why do you fall?'

"And this is the tale he told:—

"'When I was very young, and very, *very* tiny, I lay upon the bosom of my mother, the Ocean. And many a time when I was inclined to be fretful, because the wind ruffled my spray-like hair, she gently rocked me off to sleep,



A RAIN FAIRY.

“ ‘ Then came a day when the sun held out his hands and arms to me in such a winning fashion, that before I knew what he was doing, he had lifted me up and placed me in the downy folds of a fleecy cloud.

“ ‘ At first I felt a little frightened, especially when I peeped down at the great big moving world beneath.

“ ‘ But very soon I perceived that there were quite a number of us being carried by the cloud, and as we were all in the same boat, so to speak, it was not long before we became quite friendly.

“ ‘ As the days went by we often talked about the things over which we passed, and many a time we wondered what some of them meant.

“ ‘ Very strangely, perhaps, the higher we were taken into the air, the better our eyesight became; until, like ocean birds, we could see right down into the deepest deeps of the sea. It was, therefore, not at all difficult for us to pick out all kinds of things not usually seen from the surface of the water, or even from the top of a ship’s mast.

“ ‘ One of the first and most alluring sights we thus saw, was a circular bed of coral, all pink and glowing in the clear still depths of the Pacific Ocean.

“ ‘ Later on, when crossing the Caribbean Sea, we saw enormous masses of coloured sea-weeds fantastically curling their hands and arms in a never-ending variety of graceful movements. Almost immediately, there came before our eyes dark old Spanish galleons, stuffed with stolen gold, sunk by British merchant-ships, or maybe privateers, all their crews still stark and stiff in the deep unmoving waters. Not far removed was the gallant little ship in which Sir Richard Grenville and his glorious crew fought, single-handed, a fleet of Spanish Buccaneers; and, rather than yield, sank beside their guns. There they were, still resolute of pose in spite of all the years that have gone since then, and, seemingly, ready as ever to uphold the valour and the honour of the British race.

“ ‘ Anon came other sights and scenes. Southward over Africa we float, peering at the Kraals, or houses, of African negroes; the patches where they grow their mealies, and the wide open spaces

where their cattle roam. And, heavy now with our growing weight, the cloud just skims over the tall tops of a far-flung forest, when, full in view upon a great square of cleared land, we see a mighty host of stalwart Zulus being marshalled by their Chief in readiness for war. Without the slightest warning, they give vent to a most terrifying shout. Instantly a vast number of our fellow-travellers, thoroughly startled, fall from the cloud to the ground, and, as it suddenly rises again, we see them running as hard as they can for the creeks and the river not far away.

“ ‘Turning northward, for days and days we seemed to do nothing but drift and drift, the weather all the time becoming warmer and warmer. Then, just as if an intervening screen had been pulled suddenly and swiftly away, there below us lay the great Desert of Sahara. Far, far down, a thin stream of camels, heavily laden, were wending their way in the peculiar, tortuous, twisting fashion which is common to them. Upon the camels’ backs were gaily-coloured coverings fringed and tasseled with red and gold. On certain of the camels, in a kind of tent, rode a number of dark-eyed ladies, dressed in the most gorgeous silks and satins, their faces partly veiled, their little feet encased in dainty slippers, but always their flashing teeth and shining eyes to show that they were happy.

“ ‘All at once the scene is changed. A broad line of swiftly-moving horses comes, as it were, from nowhere—grey horses, whose arching necks, slim legs, and small round feet, show them to be Arab thoroughbreds. Astride these horses there are dark-browed men in cloak-like white burnouses, racing forward in such a way that it is plainly their intention to surround, and, maybe, murder, those connected with the camels.

“ ‘But not without a struggle will they be permitted to do as they please, for as soon as they are seen, the camels are drawn into a circle, and the dark-eyed ladies set within its very centre. Inside the ring, behind their animals, who have been told to lie down, are crouched the grim, alert, and silent merchants. In their hands are their rifles, ready loaded. Everything is death-like in its stillness. Even the thudding of the horses’ hoofs, at all times faint upon the sand, is, by the gentle breeze blown in the opposite direction.

“ ‘ Suddenly there comes a yell from the charging horsemen, and, at the very same instant, a flash of guns from the merchants. But, alas! in less time than it takes to describe it, the horsemen are victorious, the merchants are dead or captive, the dark-eyed ladies tied with silken cords, and the whole train—camels, horses and human beings—set in motion towards the desert City, wherein those of the merchants who are still alive will be turned into slaves, their goods and camels sold to the highest bidders, and their ladies taken into the harems of the Arabs rich enough to buy them.

“ ‘ Northward still we go, until Mount Vesuvius is reached. Oh, what a smoke and heat! I nearly dropped with suffocation! Indeed, I should have fallen straight into the great red yawning crater, with its awful fires, had it not been for the soft but strong hold by which the cloud upheld me. Never again do I want to see that burning place. The very memory of it, even now, causes me to tremble. . . .

“ ‘ Then, not far from Mount Vesuvius it seemed, we barely succeeded in passing over such gigantic mountains that their tops are forever covered in snow—white, cold and unutterably still. Yet, even as we gazed, dumb-struck with the wonder of it all, there came the sun’s great rays, and, magically, gloriously, turned the snow to gold—to gleaming gold, mountains of gold!

“ ‘ Southward and Eastward then we went! Over the burning plains of India, past the Taj Mahal, that mighty monument to woman’s love and virtue, and to the memory of a great Prince; southward to Ceylon, set within the circling seas, and then, rapidly over the ocean back to Australia, where, glad to see and smell the Eucalypts again, down I fell to do them service!

“ ‘ As to why I fall, it is because that is the only way in which I can do my share of the things that must be done. My chief duty is to nurture and refresh everything that grows; and as that can best be accomplished by falling on or about them, therefore that is the thing I do.’ ”

When this story was completed, there suddenly broke out such a hum of conversation that it was quite a little time before the Prince

was able to announce that, by special request, the Official Recorder had consented to give a contribution towards the evening's entertainment.

And this is what he said:—

THE DOOR MAT'S STORY

“Once upon a time, a long while ago, I met a wandering Scribe who told me how he had once heard a Door Mat and a Bass Broom talking to each other. Strange as it may seem, they appear to have made many shrewd observations, and, put into rhyme, this is the gist of what the Scribe said:—

This is the tale of the front Door Mat,
And this is the pith of his learning:
He who aspires as a brave man should;
She who desires what a sweet maid would;
Must, ere they rise in the World's affairs,
Learn that the prizes they seek are theirs,
If they, in the struggle with carks and cares,
Keep Sweet!
Clean their feet!
And leave behind them the grit of the street!

This is the story he told his friend,
His friend, the Broom—
The Big, Bass Broom,
Who never was known to enter a Room,
But swept and scrubbed
Until he was dubbed
The terror of Drains and Greasy Stains,
The Garden Paths and the Clothes Yard!

This is his narrative, word for word,
Just as he rendered it; overheard

Up near the door, where the Fairy Scribe
Wrote it all down for his own wee tribe;
And, so he said, to the Town next day
Took it to print; but I grieve to say
That not 'till now has it seen the light!
But, as you know, in the Town's poor plight,
Things are o'erlooked both by night and day,
And thus, I learn, went the 'proofs' astray!
So, not till now has the tale been told:
Just as I give it you, true as gold!

Keep sweet!

Mind your feet!

And bring not in the grime of the street!

Said the Mat:

' At the big front door I've stood for years,
And I've heard folks laugh, and seen folks' tears;
I have seen them gay, and seen them sad,
I have known some good, and met some bad;
But from each and all I learned a truth,
And of this I speak in love and ruth;
For the thing they taught (which all may learn),
Is to purchase not before you earn;
For the man who buys ere his wage be paid,
Though he live in splendour will live afraid.

Keep sweet!

Brush your feet!

And forget, if you can, the mire of the street!

' I have seen some come with goods to sell,
And I've known the truth they would not tell!
For if lies are used when wares are bought,
Then by lies be sure will sale be sought.
But of all such buying, sale and gain,
In the Book of Fate the sum's writ plain;
For the one who robs by word or deed,
Of his soul sells out in stupid greed;

And for such an one, when life is passed,
There is nought but grief for wealth amassed.

Keep sweet!

Watch your feet!

And step not into the filth of the street!

‘ There were those who came with sorrow’s tale,
Of a wife long sick, and children pale;
Of a daughter weak or son just dead,
Of a mother starved for lack of bread!
But in these, I knew, Love’s fires were cold,
That their aim and hope was Pity’s gold!
Yet, for such the gold will turn to dross,
And the profits all shall come to loss;
For the Law is this while justice lives:
To the man be gain who value gives!

Keep sweet!

Dust your feet

And stand not out in the Stour of the Street!

‘ But I’ve also seen throughout the years,—
As the worn and weary told their fears;
How the smile of hope effaces pain,
And the listless stir to life again
At the kind word said or good deed done
As they passed along; and everyone,
With a new-born joy and ardour filled,
Has again felt moved, if God so willed,
To withstand the Earth’s consuming fire,
And the nobler realms of Love aspire!

Keep sweet!

Stamp your feet!

And shake off the dust of the windy street!

‘ And I’ve seen a child for flowers come in,
With a winning smile and dimpled chin;

And the gift evoked within each breast,
An elation sweet, as of the blest!
For that blossom bright was sure to bloom
In the dullest days of doubt and gloom;
While the fragrance hid within its heart;
Of the child was soon to grow a part!
And the same note rings o'er all earth's cries,
For a kindly action never dies!

Keep sweet!

Guard your feet!

And you need not touch the mud of the street!

Said the Broom to the Mat:

' In the yard I've lived most all my life,
And with dust and dirt I'm aye at strife;
So I know 'tis true the tale you tell,
For have I not also learned it well?
And to those who happen to cross my way,
From the facts I've gained, I often say:
If you want to win in life's great game,
It is well to stop when burns the flame!
For the one who dares with fire to play,
Will in burnt-out ash be swept away!
For the Law is this: 'Tis clearly writ—
And the fate of fools all witness it:

Sweep hard!

Dirt discard!

Or you'll slip on the slime of your own back yard! "

So these are the words of the Mat and the Broom;

And this is the sum of their learning:

" Attempt not to better the style of your room,

Except by your own honest earning!

For the Liars, and Misers, and Swindlers, and Fools,
Are the handles and hafts of the Arch-Devil's tools!

And this truth, it were well, should be taught in the
schools:

Sweep hard!
Dirt discard!
And never neglect your own back yard!"

When the "Official Recorder" had finished, the Prince stood up and said that he had great pleasure in asking the fourth of the "Five Story Tellers" to tell a tale.

And this is the story told by "Smell":—

CLOVER PERFUME'S STORY

"Once upon a time, a long while ago, I was looking for a lost baby Fairy in a field of well-grown, rich red clover.

"The day was warm, and the drowsy hum of countless bees suggested to my mind that, perhaps the object of my search had fallen down, and was somewhere lying asleep beneath the spreading clover. Very carefully, therefore, I pulled aside many and many a bunch of sweet smelling blossoms, hoping to discover him.

"Just as I found him I accidentally plucked a somewhat larger blossom than the rest from off its long, green stem, and, not exactly thinking of what I was doing, I parted the petals; and there, in the very heart of the flower, I saw the sweetest little fellow in creation.

"In spite of the fact that he had been disturbed in a nap—for he woke up the very moment I espied him—his face instantly wreathed itself in smiles, and he waved his tiny hand at me in the friendliest greeting imaginable. Of a truth his whole attitude and bearing were so pleasant and affable that I was greatly taken with him, and felt an immediate desire to have him tell me something of his history, and his work. Indeed, so strongly was my curiosity aroused, that, almost before I was aware of it, I said: 'Who are you, and what is your story?'

"And this is what he said in answer to my question:—

" 'My name is Clover Perfume, and I am one of a very numerous family. To tell you the truth, I have brothers and sisters and all manner of other relatives all over the world. Everybody knows me,' he continued, 'except those who cannot smell, and they would nearly give their noses to make my acquaintance!'

"Here he laughed so merrily that for the life of me I couldn't help laughing too, though what it was all about I really couldn't say.

" 'But,' said he, 'although I am so widely known and, I think, very well liked, I have never before been asked to tell my story. I have just been accepted as a matter of course, and nobody has been the least little bit interested to know anything about my origin or history.'

"Here he heaved a very great sigh, and the breath that he expelled from his lungs was so divinely sweet that it filled my senses with delight.

"Instantly recovering himself, however, he brightly added: 'Still, I am very, *very* glad that you have asked me to tell you my story, and if you will listen, it will be a pleasure to let you hear it from beginning to end.'

" 'Go on!' said I, encouragingly; 'you will find in me a very patient listener.'

" 'Well,' he commenced, 'as you are probably very well aware, when God first made man he was nothing more than a lifeless image; he could neither move nor speak! But having fashioned him so much like Himself, and being pleased with His work, God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul! This was the greatest of all gifts. On no other created Thing was anything like so remarkable and wonderful a gift bestowed.

" 'But, what you do not know is that, whilst the making of man was in progress, the trees and flowers were looking on—silent, still, and breathless with amazement and surprise. Indeed, so astonished were they, so overpowered at the miracle they were privileged to see, that they temporarily ceased to grow, and might easily have died.

" 'But this was not to be; for, seeing what had happened, God caused them to revive, and knowing that He had already fixed for them their stations and their modes of life, out of His great compassion, and because of the awe and reverence with which they had looked upon His work, said to them: "Behold I give unto you a further gift. Beauty and symmetry thou hast! In addition, take from Me all those who will, the gift of sweetness, that ye may forever bear witness to the airs of Heaven and the glory of your Creator!"

“ ‘ So saying, into the soft and balmy air He breathed one glorious breath, which, spreading and falling, was, in the process, disintegrated or broken up into a myriad marvellous atoms. These ineffably sweet and fertilising atoms the trees and flowers immediately and eagerly *in-breathed*—some more, some less, each according to its mode and manner, but all with rapturous delight.

“ ‘ And one tiniest atom there was that, falling lower than the rest, fell upon a pale white clover blossom, who, when she drew in the impregnating life-giving breath of the Almighty, blushed to rosy redness, and in perpetual remembrance of that great occasion, has ever since retained her beauteous colouring. . . .

“ ‘ Later on I was born, and, even as I lay in the soft and delicate arms of my roseate mother, she began to whisper to me little portions of this wondrous story.

“ ‘ As I grew in strength, and my mind acquired a better grasp of things, I finally got to understand the meaning of it all, and to appreciate to the full how remarkably lucky I was to have been blessed with so fortunate a mother.

“ ‘ When, at last, she saw that I was fully awake to all these things, she began to confide in me the set ambition of her life, the dearest wishes of her heart. And those wishes I am proud and happy to execute, for they not only serve to indicate the loving and the gracious nature of my mother, but they are in themselves so pleasing that I have no other aim in life except to carry them out.

“ ‘ As to what they are, you, perhaps, may guess.

“ ‘ In a few words, my mother desired above all other things in the world, that some portion of the boon which had been so marvellously bestowed upon her, might in turn be given to all her kith and kin; and as I had been endowed from birth with the peculiar faculty of being able to transfer to others some small part of the gift of sweetness she had been enabled to transmit to me, she naturally and properly taught me how to exercise and use my talent to the utmost of my capacity.

“ ‘ So it is then that, like a bee, I am engaged in flitting from flower to flower in order to place in the heart of each a tiniest drop of that miraculous God-given essence which, as you have learned, was in-

tended to be an eternal reminder of the fact, that, like the sweet odours of Heaven, the perfume of the flowers and trees is of Divine origin.' ”

As soon as the story was over it immediately became apparent that something was about to take place which was unknown to Prince Waratah, and quite outside the plan that he had in mind when the evening's amusement was begun; for, just as he was rising to intimate what the next item was to be, King Acacia whispered something in his ear, and he sat down again.

What had been said to the Prince nobody knew; but as afterwards appeared, it must have been a request to be permitted to communicate to the guests a most important piece of information. That this was the case found instant confirmation in the fact that with a nod to King Eucalyptus, they both rose in their places, and King Acacia, addressing the assembled company, said:—

“ We have almost come to the end of the evening's fixture. Before the last item is called, however, there is a ceremony to be performed which King Eucalyptus and I have agreed should now take place. We therefore ask the Official Recorder, who has already been secretly informed of what is to take place, whether he is ready to proceed?”

And the Official Recorder answered: “ Ready, Your Majesties—and at your service!”

“ Then,” said King Acacia, “ we have to announce that, in recognition of the almost miraculous service performed by Prince Waratah in the building of the Fairy City, and the erection of the glorious Palace in which we are all met, as well as to fittingly mark this great occasion, it has been decreed and determined that from this day forth Prince Waratah shall be King Waratah, and Princess Wattle Blossom shall be Queen Wattle Blossom!”

This altogether unexpected announcement naturally came as a surprise to everybody, the Prince included, but when the nature of it was fully grasped, it was followed by cheer after cheer until the room rang with their reverberations.

Proceeding again, when silence was restored, King Acacia turned to the Official Recorder and said:

"Take notice, that we, King Acacia and King Eucalyptus, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon us all by the Kings of Fairyland, do require you to set down in golden letters, in the 'Official Archives,' the fact that we, this day, in the presence of his people name the Prince Waratah, King! And in token of his Kingship we here and now invest him with the symbols of his authority!"

He then lightly touched King Waratah upon the shoulder to indicate that he was to stand up, and, as he did so, King Eucalyptus placed about his shoulders a magnificent carmine coloured robe embroidered with gold, whilst King Acacia placed upon his head a splendid crown, so fashioned that it was easy to distinguish the design of Eucalyptus leaves which adorned the band about his brow, and the several sets of blood-red rubies set in the shape and form of Waratah blooms, which rose therefrom.

Without an instant's pause, however, King Eucalyptus then spoke to the Official Recorder as follows:—

"Take notice that we, King Eucalyptus and King Acacia, in pursuance of the powers conferred upon us by all the Kings of Fairyland, do require you to set down in letters of gold, in the 'Official Archives,' the fact that we this day, in the presence of her Lord and of his people, name the Princess Wattle Blossom, Queen! And in token of her queenly rights, subject to her husband, King Waratah, we invest her with the symbols of her authority!"

He then lightly touched the Queen upon the shoulder to indicate that she was to stand up; and, as she did so, King Acacia placed about her shoulders a violet coloured robe embroidered with silver, whilst King Eucalyptus placed upon her head a lovely crown, so fashioned that it was easy to distinguish the design of wattle leaves which adorned the band about her brow, and the several sets of yellow topazes, set in the shape and form of sprays of wattle blossom, which rose therefrom.

Thus were both proclaimed and crowned, and the Official Recorder, in accordance with his duty, closed the ceremony by saying:

"Take notice, that I have this day officially recorded in letters of gold, in the Official Archives, the proclaiming and the crowning of



"King Acacia placed upon his head a splendid crown."

King Waratah and Queen Wattle Blossom! So be it! Praise be to God!"

Led by the Band, the whole company then joined in singing—

THE FAIRIES' NATIONAL ANTHEM.

Praise to God, the King of Kings,
Lord of all created things!
Prince of Love, and Master Mind,
Still direct us, lest we find
That for lack of Thine assistance
Evil meet with scant resistance.
That in service we, to Thee,
May Thy gracious kindness bring
Back in splendid blossoming!
Shelter, Lord, our noble King,
Safely underneath Thy wing.
Grant him health, and strength, and skill,
Aye to do Thy Sovereign Will!

When the last notes of the anthem had died away, at a sign from King Waratah everybody except himself sat down.

Raising his right hand straight above his head, forefinger pointing to the Heavens, he took the Fairy oath of allegiance as follows: "I, King Waratah, in the presence of the Official Recorder, and of you all, do solemnly and sincerely undertake that, to the best of my ability and strength, I will justly and truly administer the affairs of my Kingdom. So help me God!" To which everybody added: "So be it!" as the King resumed his seat.

A moment later he smilingly said: "To bring this glorious evening's pleasures to a close, I will now call upon the fifth of 'The Five Story Tellers' to tell us a tale."

In response "Hearing" immediately stood forth, and this is what he said:—

MUSIC'S STORY

"Once upon a time, a long while ago, I was standing on the rounded shore of the world, gazing into space. As I stood there, lost

in thought, my attention was eventually called to a long, slow succession of sounds like sighs, infinitely sad, but inexpressibly sweet.

"Whilst I was wondering what these sounds might mean, and from whence they came, at my feet I suddenly perceived a very extraordinary-looking little person, who appeared to be all head and no body. He was looking up at me with such a wistful expression on his face that I felt impelled to ask him, 'Who are you, and what is your Story?' And by way of answer, in a very slow and somewhat hesitating way, this is what he said:—

"My name is Music, though my parents call me Breve. For untold ages I have lived upon the outer edge of the earth with my father, Harmony, and my mother, Concord. Both my parents have quite an exalted opinion of me; but so far I have not come up to their expectations. I am very sorry that this should be the case, for nothing would please me better than to justify their hopes.

"The truth is, however, that they are so wrapped up in each other and their mutual affairs, that they will not listen to what I have to say, and so I make no progress. I am but a single sound sighing in a wilderness! If by chance I could persuade them, or, for that matter, anyone else, to do what I know in my mind is the right thing to be done, I am certain I should be a success. I know, though they do not, that my head is as full of dainty melodies as a pomegranate is full of pretty seeds, and that if only my poor tongue-tied condition were remedied, so that I might use that organ as it should be used, I could release an Octave, eight little fellows who beneath my tongue are now held captive; but who, if they were only free, are possessed of such astounding and never-ending ability, as to be able to produce a succession of the most musical notes, the like of which have never before been heard.'

"Here he sighed most mightily, and then it was that I saw he rested in the opening of a shell that is called a 'conch.'

"But,' said I, 'how am I to loose your tongue? I am no surgeon, neither have I a knife or other cutting instrument wherewith to perform the operation. Besides, would you not die if such an unpractised hand as mine attempted so delicate a task?'

" 'Not at all!' he replied, in his soft, slow tone; 'I should certainly die away just as an echo does when fleeing into space; but it really would not hurt me, I assure you!'

" Still feeling very puzzled, however, I sought for further information, and so said to him, 'But where and how did you become possessed of all these sweet-sounding notes which you claim your Octave can produce with such never-ending brilliance and variety? And further, supposing I were willing to assist you in the direction you desire, having no knife, as I told you before, is there any other way in which I could safely render you the service that you seek?'

" Instantly he brightened, and, speaking as fast as his poor tongue-tied condition would permit, this is what he replied:

" 'These notes that I am simply yearning to release I have carefully gathered together over millions of years! They have come to me from the Ocean and the Breeze, and, as they came, I classified and arranged them. Over me, throughout those infinite ages, the tumbling seas have tossed and the careless winds have blown! But always, whenever a new note I heard, I promptly seized upon it and stored it with the rest, and as it is tens of thousands of years since last I added to my collection, I am now fully satisfied that there are no fresh notes to be obtained.

" 'As to the way in which you can assist me, please hold me up to face the wind, or, better still, blow upon me strongly with your breath, and all will be well.'

" So, obedient to his desire, I picked him up in my two hands, and holding him firmly, blew sharply and strongly upon him with my breath, and, true enough, just as he had predicted, out came eight little fellows who called themselves 'Semi-Breves,' dancing and jumping about on my hands in the utmost glee!

" All at once they started singing, 'Blow again! Blow again!' and so amused was I with their caperings and cries that I blew upon them just as I had blown upon Breve, whom I thereupon let fall.

" In the flash of an eye my hands filled to overflowing with any number of other little fellows, who called themselves 'Minims,' 'Crotchets,' 'Quavers,' and 'Semi-Quavers,' and I know not what beside. And they laughed such pretty rippling laughter that I felt

constrained to join them. Yet, almost before I could utter a sound, some of them popped into my mouth, and to my utter astonishment, I found my hard, dry laughter had become almost as musical as their own.

"Whilst still more or less amazed at this delightful discovery, a skylark and a nightingale, attracted by the sweet sounds, came up to listen to what was taking place. 'Here,' said I, 'take some of these for yourselves!' and I threw to each of them a few of the notes just as they started to speak. Both were nearly choked as the notes went flying down their throats, but when they next essayed to speak they sang instead, and the music in their voices was of such a quality as to leave the listeners spellbound with delight.

"These extraordinary happenings gave me a great idea. Calling to my aid the idling Winds, I said to them, 'Take from me these glorious notes; spread them far and wide; leaving some where'er you sink to rest, and giving some to all who care to take them. Be swift, and see to it that your task is well performed!'

"Happily the winds were willing to obey my orders; and so, to the uttermost ends of the Universe there was taken a measure of Music's notes. And to every class and kind of living thing was offered a share. A very few refused the munificent gift, and so spend their lives in stony silence.

"But the great majority accepted, some, the singers, to improve their voices; others, the players upon instruments, to add to the deftness of their fingers and the delicacy of their touch; others, again, such as the Nightingale, the Bul-bul, and the Skylark, to fill the night or morning with their glorious mother melodies, to the great delight of all who pause to hear!"

Thus ended the Story, and so was brought to a happy conclusion the ceremonies and the entertainments connected with the marriage festivities.

The Band then struck up the Fairies' National Anthem, and as all stood up whilst King Waratah and Queen Wattle Blossom passed slowly and smilingly down the room, there began for the Royal couple such a wonderful career of love and happiness that even to this day it is the pride and joy of Austral Fairyland!



"They, the children of the sky,
.....
To the moon—their mother—came one happy summer night."

THE MOON'S GARDEN PARTY

In the days before to-day,
Ere the Stars were made to stay
In the places where, since then, they shed their light!
They, the Children of the Sky,
Full of fun, but coy and shy,
To the Moon, their mother, came one happy summer
night!

Came they seeking right disposal
Of a sweet but strange proposal;
Which was, that to Earth they should be taken,
And upon its sward so green,
Meet the creatures they had seen
The Sun, with his spears, each morning waken!
Thus it was, their eyes alight,
Round her knees they clustered tight,—
Clamant for the new delight!
And the Moon, Dear Mother Moon!
Smilingly inclined her head,
And in whispers softly said:
“We shall go there very soon, very soon!”
So, without a shred of doubt,
It was thus it came about
That Her Majesty, the Moon,
In her silver gown and shoon,
Held a Revel one high noon
In a large and lovely garden with a Lawn!
And such a Lawn!

It was wide and smooth and ordered,
And with shady trees 'twas bordered
All around!

In the centre, there were beds,
Full of plants; all greens and reds,
And a lake that mirrored them till dawn!
And about the lake so fair
There was wavy maiden-hair
That from out its rocky edges shyly grew!
But, above the mignonette,
Where the other blossoms met,
There were whisperings of apprehensions new;
And the flowers, bathed in light,
Seemed to tremble, as with fright,
When the straying Autumn breezes gently blew!
For the fingers of the wind
Caught them playfully behind,
And so doing, shook their fragrance on the air!
Threw it broadcast on the undulating air!
Out beyond the garden fences,
Through the paddocks, there commences
The unbroken bushland prime;
In its sheltering recesses
Nature nurtures and caresses
All that's native to this clime!
There, man's ruthless usurpation
Stops, and peaceful occupation
Is conceded,
Unimpeded,
To all who make it their abode or habitation!
Yet this spot of earth primeval,
With its denizens coeval,
Does not always peace contain;
And the hushed and restful stillness
Oft is broken by the shrillness
Of some cry of fear or pain!

Goshawks grey, or red, or white,
And the tense black-shouldered kite,
Soar and strike the livelong day!
And at night the marbled owl,
Swiftest of night's hunting fowl,
Swoops upon its startled prey!
Still, not all is black disaster;
Death is fleet, but life is faster,
And its numbers aye o'ermaster
Death's invading arms!
O'er a gum-tree, lightning-blasted,—
(Where once honey-bees repasted!)
See the Forest Queen her creamy mantle throw;
Or upon a bank of rubble
Barely clothed with ferny stubble,
Watch the purple smilax dainty blossoms blow!
Or again, where "bottle brushes,"
Peopled are by singing thrushes,—
From whose throats a chorus rushes,
Note the Forest's charms!

Now within the garden grand
A great Summerhouse did stand;
And its doors were very wide and extra high;
For within it, tree-ferns tall,
Spread their fronds from wall to wall,
And so thickly, that they quite shut out the sky.
This, the stars banked up with flowers—
Culled from all the aerial bowers
That behind the clouds are hid from mortal sight!
And they then with loving care
Decked the whole with colours rare,
Brought to beauty by their own resplendent light!
Viands, too, they brought and spread
On a table that with bread
And all delicatest dainties was agleam!

This they did, that guests to leave,
Might, ere going, each receive
From the hostess Queen a gift on which to dream!
In the meantime, there was sent
Through the garden's wide extent,—
A most kindly note to all who therein delve,
To attend an evening Fete,
When the Moon, in robes of State,
Would receive and entertain them, just at twelve!
Then excitement grew intense,
For a problem so immense
Had not ever met the garden folk before!
How were they to meet the Queen,
Who, ere this, had not been seen,
Save above them, as a Goddess to adore?
Who among them all should lead?
What new dresses would they need?
Would they want an introduction, or just pass
Like the troops upon parade
When a demonstration's made,
And the King himself reviews them in the mass:
These, and nicer questions all,
At a Conference or Call,
In discussion, were determined and agreed!
So it fell that at long last,
All their worries overpast,
There was nought to do save gather and proceed!
But talk about a clatter!
Speak about a row!
Why a Black's Corroboree,
Or an Indian Pow-Wow
Are as nothing,
Simply nothing,
To the rattle and the roar
That all other sounds defied,—
When the guests began to pour

Through the gate
At a rate
That a shepherd could not state
If to count them he had tried!
For, like little Dolly Varden,
All the dwellers in the garden,
All the beetles and the other tiny things;
All the spiders and the aphis,
With the "Kooka," and the Mavis,
Came a-hopping and a-flopping
On their little legs and wings!
And the cries that they emitted!
Made one think that they were fitted
For a Zoo,
Perhaps two!—
By the way they carried on!
But to silence all were bidden,
When from out the cornflowers hidden
Came a Mantis, with his hands outspread and high;
And in tones that each could hear,
Full and round, yet sweet and clear,
Simply cried:
"Stand aside!
For the Mower and his Lady now draw nigh!"
Then to places all were hurried;
Some were late, and so were flurried,
But the Marshal set them right!
Marshal Spider!—
Splendid Rider!—
Mounted on a Magpie proud;—
Set to order,
Quelled disorder,
Closed the lines and kept the crowd!
For the stakes, to which the roses
In the Summer-time were tied;

With their sharp and pointed noses
Stood the carriage drive beside!
Each was held by some tall froggy,
Who upon a Falcon black,
Seemed to wish that it were foggy
So that he might cool his back!
But to duty they were bound,
And not e'en so sweet a sound
As the lapping of the wavelets on the lake,
Could have caused them to forsake,
The especial posts to which they were assigned.
Theirs the task to guard the Drive,
So that each one to arrive,
Might not stray beyond the line
Of the driveway's broad incline;
But would join with all the rest,
Into proper order pressed,
In the way the marshal had designed!
When at length, in silence standing,
In a voice of power commanding
Spake the Marshal to the rapt, expectant throng:
"Let each gallant pair be ready,
To advance in order, steady,
When the Mower and his Lady move along;
For the Mower is our King,
And behind him we will bring
To Her Majesty the Moon and to her Court,
Such a wealth of garden lore
As may never, never, more
Be attempted or projected e'en in thought!"
Scarcely had the Marshal ended
Ere the Mower's train extended,
Fell into its place and moved towards the Lawn!
First, of course, the Heralds Royal,
Clothed in all the colours loyal:
Gaudy Butterflies, with banner-wings outspread.

Next the soldier-ants, so sprightly,
Stepping gaily, straightly, lightly,
With what seemed a most determined martial tread!
Followed on the King's retainers:
Busy bees in brown and gold;
Then the bravos and maintainers;
Hardy beetles, brave and bold.
After these the Knights and Consuls
With their Ladies fair and fine:
All the birds that seek the garden
When the golden wattles shine!
In their midst the Mower stately,
King of all the garden race,—
And his Queen the Water-sprinkler.
Tall and slender, full of grace,
But as shy and quickly startled as a fawn!
Thus, in order, as directed,—
None were otherwise detected,
On they moved to meet the queen!
On the spacious, trim, and flower-surrounded Lawn!
And not least among the party
Were the Mower's henchmen hearty:
 All the tools,
 Which he rules
With a blade both swift and keen!
Rake and Hoe and Pick and Shovel;
Fork and Spade and Knife and Can;
Hammer, Saw, and Sieve and Level;
Nails and Screws all spick and span;
Seccateurs and Shears and Spanner;
Nuts and Bolts and Augers fine;
Each according to its manner,—
Rule and Rod and folded line.
E'en the old green garden barrow,
On whose forefront perched a sparrow,
Bobbed along on shaky legs!

Then there came the refuse-bin,
On whose lid of rusty tin
Danced a group of clothes-pegs!
After these the yard-broom strode,
Gruff and grim with seeming ire;
And from out his dark abode
Rolled a coil of fencing wire!
Then emerged the "steps" a-striding,—
On their top a cat was riding,—
Tail erect and back all arched!
Right behind, its white face gleaming,
From beneath its banner streaming,—
Bravely on the flagpole marched!
And, not wishing to be listed
From a gathering so strange,
Came the scythe all bent and twisted,
With the axe, well out of range!
Other things were there in dozens!
Little folk the garden cozens,—
Such as round the Lattice play!
Snails and Slugs and Red-spot Spiders!
Thrifty Ants (those rare providers!)
And the Slaters clothed in grey!
Churchmen, too: The green-robed Mantis,
Praying for the lost Atlantis,—
Or at least they seemed to be!
Lawyers, clad in black and white:
Magpies properly bedight,
And the Lark of Minstrelsy!
Parrot politicians, too,
Talking, talking, as they do,—
Of the scarcity of corn!
When the spring lambs should be shorn!
What would happen without rain—
Would the farmers sow again?

But by far the rarest sight,
Of that wondrous Autumn night,
Were three lovely kittens white;—
Who, within a basket sleeping,
As, 'twas thought, in safest keeping,
Woke to find that, all undone,
Their pink ribbons, one by one,
Had been knotted to their basket
Tightly as a sailor's gasket!
And, as if by Magic brought,
The basket to a carriage wrought!
'Twas all so very, *very* queer,
No kitten outside Fairy-land
Could ever, *ever* understand
What made the basket disappear,
And, in the twinkling of a star,
Be turned into a basket car!
But a bright-eyed little mouse,
Watching from within the house,
Saw exactly what took place!
Four brown spiders spun the wheels
Round about four cotton reels.
Two red robins wove the hood
Out of grass and chips of wood.
Two jays built the driver's place
Jutting from the basket's face.
Two blue wrens, so spry and neat,
Fixed behind a "dicky" seat!
For the lamps, two glow-worms bright,
Shed their lustre on the night!
Two woodpeckers made the pole
From a slender wattle, whole!
Then, the basket car to draw,
Four white gulls, in ropes of straw,
To the carriage firmly tied,
With each other proudly vied,

As they paced along!
A whip-bird drove the willing team,
By the star-light's silver gleam!
At his side a soldier-ant,
(Sort of footman-Adjutant!)
Care-free quite of war's alarms
Sat with loosely folded arms!
Four more soldier-ants beside,
Lent an air of splendid pride
To the kittens shy inside!
Two to ride postillion-wise;
Two to guard and supervise
From the seat behind!
Thus to meet the Queen they fared;
Nothing wanting, nothing spared
To please the eye and mind!
But, before they reached the Queen,
There was quite a little scene——
That a temporary stoppage did entail;
For, with not a warning note,
From the Rosary remote,—
Came a sound that made the anxious Marshal quail!
It was due to some field crickets,
Who, on coming through the pickets,
Had been told to be quite ready
To play something soft and steady
When Her Majesty the Moon,—
(Who conferred on them the boon!)
Should come forth to meet her guests upon the Lawn!
But the Band,
At its stand,
Should have waited the command
To begin the music mystic,
With its Summer strain artistic,—



"The Mower and his lady met the Queen."

Ere it broke

At a stroke

Into tunings that the sleeping echoes woke!
So, the worried Marshal spider,
Sent a swallow-scout outrider
With most mandatory orders
To retire behind the borders,
And await the time propitious
To begin the strain ambitious,
Which should tell in martial bars
That the Queen and Court of stars,
With attendant satellites,
And the page boy stellar sprites
Were in waiting on the Lawn!
On the smooth and spacious Lawn!
When the episode was ended,
And a like mistake forfended,
Forward went the line extended
Down the carriage drive!
Turning, where the beds give entry,
Past a Robin Redbreast sentry,
Without haste, as do the gentry,
On the lawn did they arrive!
And the Moon that moment walking,
With her starry daughters, talking,
From the Summer-house came forth!
On the instant, came the crashing
Of the cricket music dashing,
Swift as pallid lightning flashing
From the far-off sombre North!
Stood aside the Heralds then,
Stepped behind attendants ten,
And *The Mower and his Lady met the Queen!!*

What a scene!
Surely ne'er before was seen
So much majesty serene,
So much graciousness and light
As graced the lawn that autumn night!
For, as each made due obeisance,
With polite and sweet complaisance,—
 And passed on;
Into scattered knots and groups,
Into merry little troupes
 They fell;
 And the swell
Of the mingled conversations,
And the witty observations;
 The soft requests
 And whispered jests,
 With the laughter
 That came after,
To the Queen and all her Court was music rare!
And the supper fine that followed!
Oh! what quantities they swallowed
Of the dainties and the delicacies rare!
Black ants' milk and box-tree honey;
Manna flakes, the shapes of money;
All the richest kinds of berries,
Currants, bush-grapes and wild cherries!
Grains and seeds and sugar-beet
Such as field birds love to eat!
Dew, in cups the gum-trees make
For their lovely blossoms sake.
These and other things galore
That the ants and spiders store!
Ev'ry sort of tasty dish
Such fastidious folk could wish!

Ne'er before was served such fare;
Full and plenty and to spare!
Supper over, oh, what fun,
Was upon the lawn begun!
Dances, jigs, and turkey-trots
Round about forget-me-nots,—
Whose sweet eyes of tender blue
With amazement changed their hue,
When a hammer and a spanner
Underneath the Queen's own banner,
In a rather awkward manner
Danced a sort of highland fling!
And a lanky Adjutant,—
With the red-legged Crane, his aunt,
Winked his eye, and said, "I can't
Say I like this kind of thing!"
But the Augers straight and strong,
With their own peculiar song
Drowned his voice their chords among,—
As they sang:
"Come along! Oh, come along!
Join the happy gladsome throng!
Games that everyone can play;
Now's your chance, so come away!"
Ring-a-rosey! Twos and threes—
Which the bees
'Mid the trees,
Played with such consummate ease,
That the Ladybirds they chased
Tripped and stumbled as they raced,
Quite outpaced
By those honey-hunter bees!
And the sly and subtle chaffing
Of the Lovers, who, since quaffing

Each the other's health,
Had by stealth,
Sought out places where they might
 Woo delight,
Free from all the tauntings light
Of the Merry-makers bright!
 But, of course,
 No resource
Of the sweethearts, could perforce
Any sort of quietude enforce.
So they had to just submit
To the things that stung or hit
As do lovers everywhere!
 Here and there
 Amid the crowd
Could be seen the elegant or proud;
 Whilst some, alas,
 (But let that pass,)
Were what is known as "loud."
The Rake and Hoe, a wicked pair:
Knight bachelors are they,
With easy style, true debonair,
Went strolling 'mid the ladies fair,
The gayest of the gay!
The Spade went prinking round the lawn,
Miss Shears was on his arm!
The Hay-fork pitched about till dawn
Forgetful of the Farm!
The Fern-tubs frowned upon the scene,
The Lattice glared its grief;
The Bulbs, in pots, though quite serene,
Displayed a sad belief
That all this freakish capering
Must bring its own relief!
And so it chanced!

For, with scarce a warning sound,
Straightly stepping o'er the ground
Where the fence was broken, found,
Came the bush-folk forth to greet the Queen!
From the Forest they came ranging,
All in order, never changing,
In a stream across the paddocks green!
At their head, twelve Ibis slender,
Hid from view a kind of Tender
Borne upon the backs of Iguanas strong!
This, first strewn with sweet wild clover,
Was with bush flowers covered over;
One fair bloom for ev'ry member of the throng!
These, as Tribute was intended
For the Queen Moon great and splendid,
Whom to honour and to serve
Without question or reserve
Was a duty that they loved to pay!
And their sacred emblem-flowers,
Choicest of the Forest dowers,—
Were their gracious Queen to show,
That among her folk below,
Nothing could their true allegiance sway!
Thus enhanced,
Through the garden they advanced
Making for the Lawn!
On they came!
The Emus stately,
Proudly, quietly, sedately;
Followed by the Herons fine!
Wombats, Wallabys and Dingoes;
Grey Companion-Flamingoes;—
'Keets and Lories line on line!
Woolly Bears and 'Possums grey;
Singing birds and birds of prey;


Platypuses; blue-tongued Lizards;
Mallee Hens, and Bower-Bird wizards,—
Hiding all they find away!
Cockatoos, white, black and pink;
Kestrels, Kites and Shrikes and Bats;
Flying Foxes; Native Cats;
Plovers from the Marsh's brink!
Kangaroos, like tall men walking;
Cassowarys gravely stalking;
Falcons black, and Wedge-tailed Eagles,—
Strongest of the feathered beagles!
And the Egrets all too rare!
Black-necked Storks with wings so spacious;
Lyre-birds beautiful and gracious,
And the Magpie Lark so spare!
Honeyeaters, Red-capped Robins;
(In and out like fiery bobbins!)
Wrens of ev'ry sort and hue,
And the great Kingfisher blue!
Whipbirds, Rails and Orioles;
Bronzewing Pigeons; Pratincoles;
Every Austral bird of note,
From the Owl to Pardalote!
Soarers, perchers, coursers, waders,
Like an army of invaders,
On they came towards the Lawn!
The spacious, cool, green Lawn!
Presently, as they drew nearer,
Forms and faces growing clearer;
 Silence fell,
 Like a spell,
On the guests who just before
Had not dreamed there was in store,
A sight so passing strange!

E'en the Queen herself, 'twas plain,
Looked for someone to explain,
At and on whose word they came!
But, as soon as on the Lawn
The new arrivals all were drawn;
Forward stepped a Cockatoo,
In his milk-white plumage new;
And in accents somewhat high,
Said they thus had ventured nigh,
That they might their homage yield,
To their Sovereign and their Shield,
For whose sake they'd gladly die.
Then, without undue premise,
Like a statesman, very wise,—
Craved the Queen's most sweet permission,
To present, without omission,
All the several little groups
That in eager anxious troupes
Waited on her word!

And the Queen,
It was seen,
Smiled so gracious a consent,
That they all, with one intent,
As in passing, down they bent,
Flung their flowers about her feet!
Ringed her round with posies sweet!
This fair ceremony ended,
Everyone who there attended,
As their way about they wended,
Met and fraternised!
Filling out the pleasures light
Of that most historic night!
Thus, as in a lover's passion,
Passed the time in wondrous fashion;

Full of such excitements new,
That the moments simply flew,—
On, and on, towards the dawn!
Then,

 Ere the sun
 Had begun
To ope his golden portals,—
Or awake were sleepy mortals;
All by common impulse moved,
Turned towards the Queen they loved,
And bending low, gave salutation!
Yet, ere moving finally away,
“Farewell! A fair farewell!” to each they say;
Resolved through work or play,
To keep that night of nights,
Like some green growing thing,
The symbol of Eternal Spring,
In sweet and fondest memory for aye!
And the Moon and starry Court,
That the wonderment had wrought,
Faded slowly out of sight
In a blaze of newer light;
So strong and bright
That it swept away the night,
And to the wakened World a new Day brought!

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